

## Agenda Item

**REPORT OF**    **Service Improvement Officer**  
**To:**            **Audit and Governance Committee**  
**Subject:**      **AGS - Review of Evidence**  
**Date:**         **19<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**Reference:**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To satisfy the Committee that the AGS Supporting Evidence reflects the governance framework

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Paragraph 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2016 requires the Council to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its control environment and to publish this in the Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement refers to a Code of Corporate Governance which was last approved by Audit & Governance Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

The Annual Governance Statement was last approved by Audit & Governance Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

A process is in place for Members of the Committee to review the evidence to support the Statement on a rolling basis.

### **2. REPORT**

At the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 it was agreed that the Council should continue to look at governance evidence topics on a random basis, chosen by the Chair prior to each meeting. The Chair has chosen Principles C2 and G1 for review at the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Principal C is about Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits. C2 is about **Providing sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.**

Principal G is about Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability. G1 is about **Implementing good practice in transparency**

A copy of these sections of the database is included in Appendix A and Members are invited either before, during or any time after the meeting, to select items for further interrogation, to satisfy themselves that the evidence accurately reflects the governance framework.

### **3. IMPLICATIONS**

#### Legal Implications

There is a legal requirement as part of approval of the annual statement of accounts

#### Financial Implications

None

### Human Resources Implications

None

### Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

N/A

### Equality/Diversity

Equality Impact Assessment prepared

### Risk Management

The evidence supporting the Annual Governance Statement reviews the Council's governance arrangements including risk management and identifies areas for improvement that are identified in the action plan.

### Compliance with Policies and Strategies

Approval and adoption of the Annual Governance Statement is a key aspect of demonstrating that Torridge District Council has undertaken an annual review of its governance framework

### Ward Member and Leader Member Views

Consultation date – Chair of A&G, Councillor Philip Hackett, on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The Committee having reviewed the evidence to support the Annual Governance Statement will then make suggestions to address any areas identified for improvement.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- The evidence contained in section C2 and section G1 of the supporting database is noted.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Consultations: Steve Hearse, Chief Executive  
Staci Dory, Monitoring Officer  
David Heyes, Statutory Finance Officer  
Councillor Philip Hackett

Contact Officers: Chris Dobbs, Service Improvement Officer

Background Papers: Supporting Database

C2 Provide sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits				100%
C2.1	Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision	Capital investment is structured to achieve appropriate life spans and adaptability for future use or that resources (e.g. land) are spent on optimising social, economic and environmental wellbeing:	The MTFS is supported by detailed analysis of customer prioritisation, risks and inflation factors. The Medium Term Financial Strategy is regularly reviewed and reported to and debated by Members.	
		Capital programme	<a href="#">Budget 2020-21 MTFS - Full Council Report</a>	
			<a href="#">Capital Programme FC Feb 2019</a>	
			<a href="#">BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERNAL O&amp;S</a>	
			<a href="#">Capital Program - Recommendations from C&amp;R Feb 2020</a>	
			<a href="#">FC Minutes Feb 2020</a>	
Capital investment strategy	<a href="#">TDC Capital Strategy 2020-21</a>			
C2.2	Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints	Discussion between Members and Officers on the information needs of Members to support decision making	Lead Members are consulted on and provide comments for Committee reports	
		Record of decision making and supporting materials	<a href="#">2019-20 Audit Manager's Opinion - covering report</a>	
			Officers provide reports to support key decisions by members; reports include risk management, legal, and financial implications. All Committee minutes are on the website and decisions are recorded in minutes and decision notices are published on the website. All of the above items are published one week in advance of committee meetings. The reason for any Part II items is set out on the agenda. Officer delegated decisions are also published on the website	
		<a href="#">Report to FC - Future High Street Fund July 2020</a>		

			<a href="#">FC Minutes - July 2020</a>	
			<a href="#">C&amp;R Decision Notice - July 2020</a>	
			<a href="#">FC Agenda showing Part II Items</a>	
C2.3	Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs	Record of decision making and supporting materials	<a href="#">Torridge Strategic Plan 2020-2023</a>	
			Officers provide reports to support key decisions by members; reports include risk management, legal, and financial implications. Decisions are recorded in minutes and decision notices are published on the website. All of the above items are published one week in advance of committee meetings. The reason for any Part II items is set out on the agenda.	
			<a href="#">Report to FC - Future High Street Fund July 2020</a>	
		Protocols for consultation	<a href="#">Constitution Part 2 - Articles</a>	
			Where key decisions will have a direct affect on local communities, consultations have been carried out to obtain stakeholder input and views and to ensure local community involvement. Results are presented to Committee as appropriate.	
			<a href="#">Communications Strategy - January 2017</a>	
	<a href="#">Consultation Strategy - July 2017</a>			
C2.4	Ensuring fair access to services	Protocols ensure fair access and statutory guidance is followed	Reports all require a consideration of financial, legal, HR, equality implications etc. Reports cannot be included on an agenda unless cleared by SFO or nominated finance staff	
			<a href="#">Report Writers Protocol and Guidance</a>	
			<a href="#">Equality and Diversity Policy</a>	

			Our website content follows web-accessibility standards, including access keys, screen readers, changeable font sizes, and links to the Aids Trust. Our website can be translated into many different languages	
			<a href="#">Website Accessibility</a>	

<b>G1 Implementing good practice in transparency</b>				<b>80%</b>
G1.1	Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate	Website	Committee agendas are published on the website and include copies of all officer reports and supporting information for decisions to be taken	
			<a href="#">Full Council Agenda - July 2020</a>	
			<a href="#">Report Writers Protocol and Guidance</a>	
		Public Participation	The council sets out on its web-site how it complies with the Local Government Transparency Code	
			<a href="#">Information guides and datasets on the Website</a>	
			Public are permitted to attend council meetings - Full Council, C&R, Scrutiny, Audit, Planning and Scrutiny. Public are allowed to speak at C&R and Full Council.	
			<a href="#">Public Participation information on website</a>	
<a href="#">Oct 2020 Zoom Full Council - Public Contributions</a>				

		Constitution	The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.	
			<a href="#">Constitution 2018</a>	
		Freedom of Information	The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations gives rights of access to all types of recorded information held by Public Authorities. In 2018/19 Torridge processed 100% of FOI requests within the statutory 20 days.	
			<a href="#">FOI Information on website</a>	
G1.2	Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny whilst not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.	Annual Report	Torridge's Annual Report provides details of the council's performance against targets and reports on the financial performance for the year. The report also sets out the vision for the council along with the key achievements.	
			<a href="#">Annual Report - 2020</a>	
			The Government encourages local authorities to publish information on their spending. To aid this transparency we publish information on payments over £500.	
			<a href="#">All Spends over £500</a>	
		Land and Property List	Each year the Council published a list of all its property and land	
			<a href="#">Torridge District Council Property Data April 2019</a>	out of date

		List of all Council Grants	The Council is required to publish annually and thereafter quarterly, data relating to grants to voluntary, community and social enterprises.	
			<a href="#">Grant Information on the website</a>	out of date
		Fees and Charges	Any charges made by Torridge are routinely published to ensure they justified and transparent	
			<a href="#">Fees and Charges 2020-21</a>	
		Officer Delegated Decision are listed on the website and planning decisions can be reviewed by keying in the planning application number to the planning portal	<a href="#">List of Officer Delegated Decisions</a>	
			<a href="#">Planning Portal</a>	