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NON-EXEMPT

# EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 March 2021

## GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

### FOR NOTING

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Richard Millard, Leader

Key Decision: No

Report Number: EHCL/066/2021

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#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report is submitted to Standards Committee for information, following the invitation to the Chief Executive to prepare a detailed governance improvement action plan at the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 meeting.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are requested to note:
  - a. The actions to address the recommendations made by David Bowles in the independent governance review, as detailed in the governance improvement action plan at Appendix 1
  - b. The timelines and routes for reporting progress made against these actions, as detailed in Section 6

#### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. In early 2020 the Council commissioned an independent governance review to be carried out by David Bowles, following allegations made by a former councillor.
- 3.2. The findings of the independent governance review were published in December 2020 and were reviewed at the 8<sup>th</sup> December meeting of Standards Committee.

The report and associated documents can be found at

<https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=390&MId=2662>

3.3. At this meeting the Committee invited the Chief Executive to prepare a detailed action plan to address the recommendations of the review. This finalised action plan is now being brought back to Standards Committee to note.

3.4. The governance review report was taken to Cabinet and full Council in January 2021. Members noted the contents of the report and were fully supportive of the Council's efforts to address the issues raised.

#### **4. Additional Budgetary Implications**

4.1. None.

#### **5. Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and/or Business Plans**

5.1. East Hampshire District Council is committed to continuous improvement in governance arrangements as set out in the Local Code of Corporate Governance. This Code describes the arrangements in place to ensure that the Council conducts its business in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

#### **6. Options considered**

6.1. The action plan contained at Appendix 1 sets out what will be implemented to address the recommendations in David Bowles' review. This work is being overseen by the Corporate Governance Board (who report to the Chief Executive) and progress made against the actions will be formally reported via the following two routes:

- a. The Annual Governance Statement 2020-21 (which is published alongside the Annual Statement of Accounts with a draft to be finalised and published by 31 May 2021)
- b. A follow-up report to Standards Committee in December 2021

## **7. Resource Implications**

### **7.1. Financial Implications**

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report. Costs associated with the implementation of the actions in Appendix 1 will be met from existing budgets.

### **7.2. Human Resources Implications**

The appropriate level of resources will be allocated by the Chief Executive to ensure the implementation of the plan within agreed timescales.

### **7.3. Information Governance Implications**

There are no additional information governance implications associated with this report.

### **7.4. Other resource implications**

Where other resources are required a business case will be developed and approved in accordance with normal procedures.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The action plan contained in the appendix reiterates the Council's commitment to ensure continuous improvement in the framework of internal control, which is designed to ensure that the Council complies with its statutory obligations.

### **Monitoring Officer comments**

Date: 16 February 2021

No further comments to the legal implications comments above.

## **9. Risks**

- 9.1 There are no additional risks associated with this report. The response and action plan contained in the appendix have been developed to mitigate the risks identified in the governance review carried out by David Bowles.

## **10. Consultation**

10.1. The action plan attached in the appendix has been developed in consultation with the Council's Corporate Governance Board.

## **11. Communication**

11.1. The action plan will be shared with staff and councillors and published on the Council's website.

11.2. Progress made against the action plan will be communicated as above (see Section 6).

## **12. Appendices**

12.1. Appendix 1: governance improvement action plan

## **13. Background papers**

13.1. Standards Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
<https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=390&MId=2662>

Agreed and signed off by:

Director: 16 February 2021

Monitoring Officer: 16 February 2021

Section 151 Officer: 16 February 2021

### **Contact Officer**

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