

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report details the Corporate Governance Improvement Plan and draft Joint Statement of Governance and Internal Control to accompany the 2010 – 2011 Annual Accounts.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Note the contents of this report;
- 2.2 Approve the Corporate Governance Improvement Plan

### **3. DETAIL**

- 3.1 In 2007 CIPFA and SOLACE published a Framework for 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. This Framework, and subsequent guidance documents, took the core principles detailed within the 'Good Governance Standard for Public Services (2004)' and adapted these for local government. These documents outline the requirements for Councils to prepare a local code of corporate governance and undertake self assessment of their governance arrangements.
- 3.2 The Council's Governance Group, chaired by the Director of Customer Services as Monitoring Officer, has responsibility for the preparation of the Local Code of Corporate Governance, together with the Governance Improvement Plan.

The Governance Group includes:

- Head of Strategic Finance (s95 Officer);
  - Head of Improvement & HR;
  - Head of Governance and Law;
  - Governance Manager;
  - Internal Audit Manager.
- 3.3 In 2010 the Strategic Management Team, Audit Committee and Executive approved the Argyll and Bute Council Code of Corporate Governance and an Improvement Plan for 2010/11.
  - 3.4 Members should note that the actions identified in last years improvement plan have been the subject of audit inspection and evidence of the progress made by the Council has been provided in respect of each of the actions. The completion of these actions provides clear evidence of ongoing improvement in the corporate governance arrangements of the Council.

- 3.5 The Code of Corporate Governance has been updated (Appendix 1) and a new Improvement Plan for 2011/12 is attached (Appendix 2) along with a draft statement for inclusion in the Accounts for 2010/11(Appendix 3).
- 3.6 The review of the effectiveness of the system of governance and internal control is informed by the:
- Work of Officers within the Council;
  - Work of External and Internal Audit;
  - Statements of Governance or Internal Control provided by external bodies;
  - External review and inspection reports; and
  - Recommendations from the Audit Committee.
- 3.7 The attached joint statement is in draft format and may be updated further when Grant Thornton UK LLP, the Council's external auditors, complete their review of the Council's Annual Accounts for 2010 – 2011.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 A Code of Corporate Governance is in place setting out the requirements for good governance within the organisation. The Code is reviewed annually, with a Governance Improvement Plan developed to address any areas of partial or non-compliance.
- 4.2 The Code of Corporate Governance, Improvement Plan, and the evidence gathered during the self-assessment allowed the Governance Group to prepare a Joint Statement of Governance and Internal Control to accompany the Annual Accounts.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

**POLICY** In line with SORP, the Council Code of Corporate Governance, and recommended practice

**FINANCE** Statement in line with SORP

**HR** None

**LEGAL** Monitoring Officer statutory role, remit includes governance

**EQUALITY** None

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Appendices  
Appendix 1 Code of Corporate Governance  
Appendix 2 Improvement Plan 2011/12  
Appendix 2 Statement of Governance and Internal Control