

Scope of responsibility

City of Lincoln Council must ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The City Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the City Council is responsible for putting in place proper governance arrangements for its affairs.

The City Council has adopted a code of corporate governance framework, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*.

This Annual Governance Statement explains how the City Council has complied with its own Corporate Governance Framework and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, regulation 4(3), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Authority transparently controls its activities. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money. During the autumn of 2014, the City Council fundamentally reviewed its governance framework. This new framework can be found at www.lincoln.gov.uk/download/51157

A governance framework has therefore been in place at the City Council for the year ended 31 March 2015 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts at Full Council on 30th September 2015.

The statement below builds on the detail contained in the Council's own corporate governance framework (so must be read in conjunction with that framework) and provides a commentary on how the framework itself has operated over the last 12 months.

1. Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

During 2014/15 the current Strategic Plan (2012-17) has remained in place, providing a consistent strategic vision and direction for the Council. The original supporting delivery plan came to an end in March 2014 (although projects contained within the document continued into 2014/15 and beyond) and a new delivery plan was

approved by Exec on 24th November 2014, which covers key projects through to the end of the plan period (March 2017). The successes achieved over 2013/14 were captured in the Council's Annual Report, produced in the autumn 2014 and available at www.lincoln.gov.uk/your-council/information-policies-and-publications/corporate-publications/. The next publication will be in autumn 2015 looking back over 2014/15.

The Strategic Plan is supported by a wealth of statistical data contained within the Lincoln Drivers report, which itself was updated and refreshed in 2013. The next refresh is scheduled for mid 2015 and work has already commenced on it.

The performance of the Council in achieving its objectives remains split across a number of structures including Corporate Management Team, Departmental Management Teams and specialist programme boards covering Towards Financial Sustainability, Growth, Strategic Plan Implementation, and Housing Revenue Account Self Financing. All remain operational and fit for purpose.

In terms of measuring performance, the Council has complied with all aspects of the now established National Single Data Set, enhanced locally by a range of strategically important tailored performance measures captured in the Local Performance Management Framework (IMPS). Whilst it was intended that the full Data Quality audit processes would be finalised in 2014/15, to support the reliability and accuracy of the data feeding into performance measures, this was not completed by the end of 2014/15. Despite this, information to support decision making remains overall of good quality and well presented, but will be enhanced once the Data Quality policy is finalised and implemented.

The underpinning on-line performance management system (IMPS) is currently being enhanced to capture progress against internal audit recommendations as well as strategic performance indicator information, capital project progress and service planning progress across various service areas. This will make reporting and monitoring much easier to Audit Committee and senior managers during 2015.

The fresh approach to reporting performance information to Performance Scrutiny Committee (where the Corporate Policy Unit provides an independent view of service performance as part of each Portfolio Holders report to committee) is working well, incorporating additional external information on service benchmarking through the national LG Inform performance portal.

Overall progress on the Council's strategic plan has been strong.

A new 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2014/15 onwards was approved by Executive on 3rd March 2014 and for 2015/16 onwards on 2nd March 2015. The latest version is available at www.lincoln.gov.uk/your-council/information-policies-and-publications/financial-policies-and-publications/medium-term-financial-strategy/112030.article. This is supported by ongoing budget monitoring throughout the year as per the governance framework and reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee are published on the Council's website. The Council remains in a good position to ensure the additional savings targets (achieving the original target at the outset of £3m pa by end of 2016/17) will be achieved in a considered way. The

Annual Audit Letters from the Council's external auditors continue to confirm that the Council is making suitable arrangements for ensuring Value for Money. Key financial risks managed during 2014/15 have centred around meeting the General Fund cumulative savings target of £2m (£1.99m achieved) and the ongoing suppressed income levels from key operational services including Car Parks, Planning and Building Control. All three areas have action plans in place to mitigate this loss of income, which are closely monitored by Corporate Management Team.

A programme of service reviews continued in 2014/15 and these will similarly progress throughout 2015/16 as the Authority delivers the savings targets set. Key service areas have been identified in a structured way and savings made/allocated to maximise the use of more limited resources.

The Council's latest Annual Audit Letter for 2013/14, published in October 2014 is available at www.lincoln.gov.uk/your-council/information-policies-and-publications/financial-policies-and-publications/ and confirms that whilst there were again issues with the quality of the benefits process, the annual accounts were closed down properly and in accordance with regulations.

Financial Procedure Rules are reviewed at intervals of not more than 3 years. The latest review was carried out during 2010/11 and was scheduled for review in 2014/15, however capacity issues within the finance team (due to maternity leave and some senior staff leaving) and the fact no gaps operationally have emerged anyway, has delayed this review. The FPR's will therefore be reviewed in 2015/16

The Equality Objectives for the Council were lightly reviewed in March 2014 and are supported by a refreshed action plan Two Year Delivery Plan. A full review of the objectives and action plan is scheduled for the latter part of 2015 and will be approved prior to the 2016/17 municipal year.

2. Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

During 2014/15 the Chief Executive and Town Clerk was unfortunately taken ill. Interim arrangements were quickly put in place, where the Director of Resources assumed the role of Deputy Chief Executive, taking on the statutory and operational CX responsibilities. The Director retains the role of Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (such a dual function is enabled within the Council's constitution). This Officer has statutory responsibility for the proper planning, administration and monitoring of the Council's financial affairs

The DCX and Leader have established a joint communication process to progress strategic and operational issues and manage operational objectives. The existing Chief Executive retired on ill health grounds in March 2015, and activity in the first quarter of 2015/16 has been focussed on recruiting a new Chief Executive, whilst retaining the interim arrangements. Specialist recruitment support has been procured.

Members and officers continue to work effectively together across the organisation.

The defined roles and responsibilities at both individual and committee level aid the demarcation of responsibility and clarify operating parameters.

The Council has spent a considerable amount of time and capacity on establishing positive formal and informal partnerships with a range of external organisations over 2014/15 to deliver the strategic ambitions of the council. Effort has been particularly focussed on the Anti Poverty Strategy and Growth Strategy for the city. Both have led to the engagement of a wide and varied range of partners, enhancing the Council's community leadership role.

The split between Scrutiny and Executive functions has worked particularly well during the year with both Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee (anti- poverty strategy) and Policy Scrutiny Committee (Article 4/ landlord accreditation scheme) both positively contributing and leading development of significant Council policy in the early formative stages.

The focus of Performance Scrutiny Committee throughout 2014/15 has been on:

- Key income generating areas such as Christmas market, Planning, Building Control and Car parking.
- Delivery of the Local Plan by the Joint Planning Unit
- Staff sickness levels
- Servitor IT implementation
- Channel shift
- Performance of the ASB/Public protection team

In addition, quarterly reports on finance, strategic risks, strategic projects and service performance were considered at the meetings on 12th June, 21st Aug, 18th November and 18th February during 2014/15.

The Council's key strategic projects are monitored by either individual programme boards (for Mega Projects) or collectively by the Council's Strategic Plan Implementation Team for those capital projects that fall below the 'Mega' threshold. In 2014/15 the key projects of particular focus have included:

Strategic:

- Developing the city centre regeneration project, developing a scheme for a transport interchange on the site of the railway station and current bus station
- Further work to bring forward a substantial mixed use development site to the west of the city (Western Growth Corridor)

Operational:

- Servitor IT upgrade relating to the implementation of new software underpinning the entire council housing repairs service (also monitored by Audit Committee following an Internal Audit report noting major improvement at that time required)

The Council's constitution remains under continual review and the present Executive/Scrutiny committee split remains in place and effective. All agendas, forward programmes and minutes are available to the public. Audit Committee remains focussed on scrutinising key governance arrangements - including oversight of progress with the "significant issues" within the Annual Governance Statement itself. The effectiveness of Audit Committee was reviewed during 2014/15 and no significant gaps were identified. The Internal Audit function remains the key service supporting Audit Committee and the Internal Audit Manager has reported no concerns in 201/15 in terms of fulfilling his role in compliance with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010).

Overall Internal Audit completed 22 audits across the Council of which 5 service areas were classed as effective, 1 given substantial assurance, 15 services requiring some improvement and 1 requiring major improvement.

No issues have arisen from the protocols for communication between Officers and Members.

During the year one call in request was made in relation to an Asset Management Group decision, and was considered by Select Scrutiny Committee on 10th March 2015. Due process was followed and after consideration by the committee, the Call In request was refused.

3. Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

Standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and staff are defined and communicated through codes of conduct as defined in the framework itself.

During the year the Internal Audit function undertook an ethical governance audit which covered compliance in all the areas below except partnerships.

- Freedom of Information scheme and guidance
- Code of Conduct for Members and Officers
- Planning guidance for Members
- Complaints process and complaints against Members
- Work of the Standards Committee
- Whistleblowing policy
- Fraud reporting / anti-fraud and corruption policy / strategy
- Protocol for Members and Officers
- Contract Procedure, Financial Procedure and Procurement Rules
- Constitution / Scheme of delegations
- Monitoring Officer role
- Register of Members' interests / Officer interests / registers / gifts / hospitality
- Local Code of Corporate Governance (in particular ethical governance section)
- Government Transparency Code
- Council Values
- Legislative Compliance

However, some "partnerships" were reviewed/audited separately.

The Council has an anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy, a whistle blowing policy and has established systems for receiving whistle blowing complaints and general service based complaints.

During 2014/15 there was one whistle blowing referral.

The Audit Committee continues to receive 6 monthly update reports on Counter Fraud arrangements and also local fraud cases. The Corporate Counter fraud risk register continues to be updated.

The Council complies with the Government's transparency agenda which includes fraud data. They mainly relate to fraud resources and numbers of cases investigated. Total number of fraud cases investigated: 102 (Full year). 97 Housing Benefit cases and 4 housing tenancy cases.

Tenancy management has investigated 4 cases of alleged sub-letting. None of the investigations has resulted in enforcement action or legal proceedings being taken against the tenants concerned.

As regards non-occupation/abandonment, tenancy management has served 22 notices to quit on tenants, resulting in their properties being taken back into the Council's possession.

Communication of the Council's anti-fraud policies to partners and contractors was again undertaken in 2014/ 15, via individual service managers responsible for those contractors and partners.

The Ethics and Engagement Committee deals with complaints about Member conduct and reports its work through to Full Council. During 2014/15 there was one complaint about Members which is still being investigated at the time of drafting this statement. There is a separate system in place to manage the conduct of staff and during 2014/15 there were nine code of conduct/disciplinary cases.

During the latter part of 2014/15 a new induction process was launched for new members of staff. This has improved further the induction process and now features:

- Full guidance for managers
- Clear roles and responsibilities for managers and the Human Resources section
- 4 checklists for the first day, 1 month, 3 months and 6 months
- A set of common things that all managers should do to induct a new starter, plus room for service specific things that apply to the position recruited to
- A new "e-learning" facility on the IT system, which all new starters must work through. It covers the basics such as E&D etc.

The staff appraisal system remains in place, with no alterations in 2014/15 or planned for 2015/16. Monitoring will continue during the year to ensure all staff have an appraisal within a 12 month rolling period.

There are registers of gifts and hospitality, interests, foreign travel and secondary employment are maintained, with 40 entries over the last year across these registers. These have been signed off by the CX.

The Council maintains and operates an Audit Committee which is independent of the Executive and Scrutiny functions. Membership is cross party and includes an independent member. Towards the end of 2014/15 the current independent member announced his intention to step down as soon as a replacement could be recruited. This is a priority action for the first three months of 2015/16.

The Council's Internal Audit function was again assessed for effectiveness during 2014/15 and no concerns or gaps were identified. During 2015/16 the Council, alongside Audit Lincolnshire, will receive an independent external assessment of its compliance with national standards of effectiveness.

4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

All agendas, minutes and forward programmes of committees continue to be published and available on the Council's website. The scrutiny annual report for 2013/14 was approved by Full Council on 29th September 2015 and demonstrates the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function. A copy is available here <http://democratic.lincoln.gov.uk/documents/s11039/Scrutiny%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Appendix%20A.pdf>

The Council has introduced a process to enable councillor calls for action to take place, but there have not been any in 2014/15.

Over the latter months towards the end of 2014/15 senior decision making in Corporate Management Team altered slightly. Whilst themed separate meetings around Growth and Towards Financial Sustainability remain in place, the Horizon Scanning and Meeting Business Needs sessions have in reality been merged and are used to cover the full range of agenda items. This has speeded up routine decision making.

The Council's risk management framework is updated annually. Audit Committee considered its effectiveness on 1st April 2014 (that meeting also explored altering the risk management process to include Risk Appetite) and again on 31st March 2015. Specialist advice is still received under contract from Lincolnshire County Council, and a recent self-assessment of the embedment of our risk management process using the national model developed by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and The National Forum for Risk Management in the Public Sector (ALARM) has seen even further improvement with the Council now seen as Driving (top score) in six of the seven categories. Risk management is now embedded at service, directorate and individual project levels.

Some risks arising from the management of health and safety do remain, but considerable progress has been made during 2014/15 across both general Fund

and HRA activity. The legacy issues remain as significant issues detailed at the end of this statement.

The Corporate Policy Unit undertakes a policy scanning service and reports all new guidance and policies emerging nationally to the Assistant Directors Group on a monthly basis. This is working well and provides a 'safety net' in case service areas have not picked up changes to legislation direct from their own alert systems.

5. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

During 2014/15 the Council has commenced a programme of reviewing and updating all key Human Resources policies and processes in consultation with the Unions. This process will continue into 2015/16.

A new induction process has been introduced in 2014/15 to ensure new staff are thoroughly inducted into the organisation. Extensive training for staff using the new process has been completed in February and March 2015.

During the year a large scale authority wide staff survey was undertaken to ascertain staff views on a range of issues. 41.9% (287 of 684) of staff responded and key themes reported back to staff at a series of corporate briefing sessions (which approximately 450 staff attended). The results in terms of staff development covered:

Areas with the highest levels of staff support/satisfaction were:

- Equality and diversity;
- The importance of good customer services;
- Linking individual roles to organisational goals with clear expectations;
- Work/home life balance;
- Being proud to work for the Council;
- Team working.

Areas where there was the least amount of support were:

- Internal career development and recruitment;
- Performance management;
- Cross departmental co-operation;
- Workload and stress levels;
- Access to technology and other resources to do the job properly.

The results in this survey led to the procurement of specialist support to help develop a series of staff workshops (four sessions were held in March 2015) to explore the emerging themes in more detail.

A refocused Organisational Development Strategy will be written in the early part of 2015/16 to enable more focussed staff training and development based on the workshop and survey outcomes. This will be aligned to the Council's future aspirations for service delivery through the "ensuring Council" model to ensure staff

are equipped with the necessary skills.

Service planning and staff appraisals still take place on an annual basis, with monitoring in place to make sure all staff do receive an appraisal.

The HR system has a training and development module which can help to record the provision of training through from appraisal, but it will take time to develop the process and update the system accordingly. This was scheduled for 2014/15 but will now take place during 2015/16 once the new Organisational Development module is in place.

There are some limitations with the existing ageing IT systems in supporting staff to maximise their capacity. These are in need of replacement and whilst the Authority has undertaken significant investment in IT hardware in previous years, a new accelerated programme of investment is in place for 2015/16 and beyond to replace the remaining older hardware and software systems. Staff workshops, in June and July 2015, will also feed into the process.

Overall, the Council maintains an effective system compliant with the PSN connection.

Member training takes a number of forms - be it formal training before, during or separate to committee meetings, or workshops on specific subjects or other Member development activity. Over 2014/15 Members training has included:

- Budget setting / Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Local Government Finance - refresher training
- Local Plan Briefing
- Council House New Builds
- Dementia Friends Briefings
- Western Growth Corridors
- Media Training sessions
- Equality & Diversity Refresher Training
- Lincoln BID Ballot Workshop
- ASB Strategy and ASB Crime and Police Act
- Car Parking Strategy Workshop
- Treasury management
- Audit Training
- Planning Presentation
- Licensing Act 2003 Training
- Safeguarding Briefing
- Licensing Committee Training
- Planning Committee Training
- Inductions for New Members
- Audit Committee effectiveness
- CIPFA Audit Committee training (Audit Lincs event at golf club)
- Fraud awareness

6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Over the past two years Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee has been directly engaging with local people and local institutions to inform the council's Anti-Poverty strategy. This has led to conferences in the winter of 2014 and again in 2015 looking at the impact of poverty in the city and how agencies working together can tackle it. This year's conference attracted 127 reps from 60 organisations. Scrutiny has therefore played a key role in determining a priority policy of the council.

In addition, Policy Scrutiny Committee during 2014/15, undertook a very high profile public scrutiny process by considering the case for and against an Article 4 direction in relation to planning restrictions on the establishment of further Houses in multiple occupation within the city. This review included a large scale public consultation exercise with scrutiny undertaken at a large local venue to enable as many members of the public and stakeholders to attend as possible. This was a good example of scrutiny in the community.

For Housing, Lincoln Tenant Panel consists of 10 tenants, whose remit is to comment on HRA related executive committee reports. This allows tenants to influence decision-making. They also monitor performance and delivery of the HRA business plan and four LTP members also sit on Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee. Tenants have also undertaken two scrutiny reviews in 2014/15 (9 out of 15 recommendations were accepted) and tenant voids property inspectors carry out inspections on 10 per cent of void Council properties before they are let to check that the Council is letting properties in line with the published 'letting standard.'

Beyond the above, public consultation exercises have been undertaken throughout the year, primarily through the Citizens Panel:

July 2014

- Cleansing Services
- Public open spaces/grounds maintenance
- Revenue Service
- City's carbon footprint
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Indoor Markets
- Sport and Leisure
- Empty homes in the private sector
- Various (e.g. community centres etc.)

November 2014

- Waste Management – including collection, recycling and garden waste
- Food Health and Safety
- City Council website and access
- Equality duty of the City of Lincoln council

And tenant surveys:

- Home! magazine satisfaction survey (approx 7,900 sent out)
- Repairs satisfaction survey (approx 1,200 tenants surveyed during the year)
- Complaints survey-(208 sent out).

Supplemented by service specific consultation exercises centred on:

- Tenancy agreement consultation
- Shuttleworth House improvements consultation
- St Botolphs' Court improvement consultation
- Article 4 planning controls on Houses in Multiple Occupation - initial survey
- The Car Parking Strategy
- The Growth Strategy
- The indoor markets
- Implementing a Public Space Protection Order for the city centre.

This is in addition to three editions of Your Lincoln and four editions of the tenant magazine (one of these is the annual report to tenants).

Neighbourhood working continues to bring together neighbourhoods boards to influence service delivery locally and resident surveys have been undertaken in Moorland and Ermine East during 2014/15.

In terms of customer feedback more generally, from April 2013 the Localism Act 2011 introduced new arrangements for dealing with complaints by social tenants against their landlords and the council's complaints procedure incorporates this change after extensive revision in the early part of 2013.

In 2014/15 overall there were 8 Ombudsmen complaints of which 4 were upheld and in 2 cases a small amount of financial compensation awarded. Complaints within the council's own complaints process totalled 417 (this compares to 418 received the previous year). Of these 367 were level 1 and 50 were escalated to level 2 (highest level). The overall average response time across all directorates was 8.4 days.

Equality impact assessments have continued to be undertaken during 2014/15 for key decisions by Executive, with the Corporate Policy Unit assisting in ensuring they are of sufficient quality. These are available as part of individual committee reports.

In terms of staff engagement, the council continues to have a productive relationship with unions, both formally through Joint Consultative Committee, and informally through other working groups.

Service reviews have continued throughout 2014/15 to meet the budget deficit/savings targets set and where there have been staff implications these have been considered by JCC following agreed consultation with those staff directly affected. The council's management of change policy has been followed.

In addition, as covered in section 5 above, the council in 2014/15 completed an authority wide staff survey.

Significant governance issues

During 2014/15 the City Council has regularly reviewed progress against the on-going significant issues identified in the previous year's AGS. Issues that have been sufficiently progressed and so now removed from the AGS are:

- **Anti-social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014:** The council has successfully implemented this wide reaching piece of legislation and was the first in the country to use it to ban the taking of "legal Highs" in the city centre, for which the council received national profile.

Significant current issues to remain a focus in 2015/16.

Those issues that remain a significant issue are reproduced below. Whilst progress has been made against all the issues as listed, it is considered, on advice from Risk Advisory Group and Audit Committee, that such progress is not sufficient to remove them as significant issues. Progress will continue to be made in 2015/16, monitored and driven forward by Risk Advisory Group. Existing action plans will therefore be updated.

- **Information Management:** Good progress has been made in previous years to provide the organisation with a comprehensive view of the information held. Collaboration with West Lindsey has now been discussed further and an agreement on the way forward is being developed. Work can potentially start in the first quarter of 2015/16.

Some collaboration with other third parties to perform Information Audits is also being discussed to help inform the work on Retention and Disposal Schedules.

However, until a draft action plan has been approved, this will remain a significant issue.

- **Housing Benefits Data Quality:** A review of quality control and accuracy has continued throughout 2014/15, with a commitment to continue this into 2015/16.

The 2013/14 Housing Benefit subsidy claim was qualified for 2013/14 but both the volume of errors, and financial adjustment, were markedly lower than in previous years. Officers have allocated checking resources on areas detailed in the qualification letter to identify trends and training issues, with the aim of minimising the effect on future claims.

A key indicator of improving performance is Local Authority error overpayment levels. This has reduced significantly.

Officers are also close to the introduction of a performance management and quality assurance system. This will give the Benefits Team greater control over the percentage of checks completed as well as the option of increasing targeted checking where required.

This will remain a significant issue throughout 2015/16 until the effect of the new quality assurance system can be evaluated.

- **Health and Safety:** This remains a particular focus and a considerable amount of work has again been completed in 2014/15 as a consequence:

Aspects that remain a significant issue are:

- i) **Control of Legionella** - An audit was planned for Quarter 4 – before the end of March 2015, however with resources being used to deliver against the management of asbestos, responsible officer duties and framework for risk assessment this is now unlikely to be completed until the end June 15.
- ii) **Management of Asbestos** - It is recognised that all critical and high risk areas have now been actioned across the whole organisation. This has been confirmed through testing on such high risk areas - which was favourable. For Housing related properties, resources within the Maintenance & Investment Team are such that there is risk that the rest of the action plan will be delayed from the original timescale. For corporate properties, progress continues to be made. Until the action plans in both Housing and Corporate Property areas are substantially delivered, both remain a significant issue.
- iii) **Responsible Officer Duties** - Again good progress has been made across the organisation, with work completed within the Corporate Property area now being adapted and rolled out to Housing.

For corporate properties, flow charts have been developed for Responsive, Cyclical & Planned Maintenance which sets out the organisation's responsibilities at each stage. The processes were 'tested' by Facilities Management in February 2015 and went live on 1st April 2015. The RO Guidance Manual has been updated. In early 2015/16 RO's are being formally assigned buildings and any final concerns amongst post holders addressed.

For Housing properties, responsible officers have been identified as have the properties. Work is taking place in 2015/16 to confirm roles and responsibilities and adapt the flowcharts within Corporate Properties to reflect the requirements in Housing. Once completed RO's will accept the documented duties, although officers are complying already - but currently not documented in a formal way.

Until all elements are in place, there is a need to retain this area as a significant issue.

- iv) **Framework for risk assessment** - Progress has continued in 2014/15. A prototype on line risk assessment process is being designed by Business Development and is being further tested in early 2015/16. Following completion of the redesign there will a 6 to 8 week implementation phase.

Other areas to retain a focus on during 2015/16 but are not classed as 'significant issues'

- **Staff Development:** The creation of a workforce development strategy and supporting training programme remains a priority over the next year to bring together the training provided across the organisation, currently driven from individual service areas.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: *Ellie Metcalf*
Leader of Council on behalf of City of Lincoln Council

Signed: *At Andrews*
Chief Executive on behalf of City of Lincoln Council