

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13

Scope of Responsibility

1. The City of London Corporation is a diverse organisation with three main aims: to support and promote the City as the world leader in international finance and business services; to provide high quality local services and policing for the Square Mile; and to provide valued services to London and the nation as a whole. Its unique franchise arrangements support the achievement of these aims. This statement refers only to the City of London Corporation in its capacity as a local authority and Police authority.
2. The City of London Corporation (“the City”) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively; and that arrangements are made to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are operated.
3. In discharging this overall responsibility, the City is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
4. The City has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE ¹Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the code is on the City’s website at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk. This statement explains how the City has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(3) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

5. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes by which the City is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the City to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
6. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage all risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable rather than absolute assurance of effectiveness. The City’s system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the City’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
7. The governance framework has been in place at the City for the year ended 31 March 2013 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

Key Elements of the Governance Framework

Code of Corporate Governance

8. The principles of good governance are embedded within a comprehensive published Code of Corporate Governance, which links together a framework of policies and procedures, including:
 - Standing Orders, which govern the conduct of the City’s affairs, particularly the operation of Committees and the relationship between Members and officers;

¹ CIPFA is the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
SOLACE is the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

- Financial Regulations, which lay down rules that aim to ensure the proper management and safeguarding of the City's financial and other resources;
- Terms of reference for each Committee;
- A Scheme of delegations, which defines the responsibility for decision-making and the exercise of authority;
- A Members' Code of Conduct, which defines standards of personal behaviour; a Standards Committee, and register of interests, gifts and hospitality;
- A Code of Conduct for employees;
- A corporate complaints procedure, operated through the Town Clerk's Department, with a separate procedure in Community and Children's Services, to comply with the relevant regulations;
- A corporate Project Toolkit and other detailed guidance for officers, including procedures and manuals for business critical systems;
- An anti-fraud and corruption strategy, including anti-bribery arrangements, and whistle blowing policy;
- A Risk Management Handbook
- Job and person specifications for senior elected Members; and
- A protocol for Member/officer relations.

9. The City's main decision making body is the Court of Common Council, which brings together all of the City's elected members. Members sit on a variety of committees which manage the organisation's different functions, and report to the Court of Common Council on progress and issues. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive is the City's head of paid service, and chairs the Chief Officers' Group, which considers strategic issues affecting the organisation. This group is supported by other officer groups, including the Performance and Strategy Summit Group and the Economic Development Chief Officers Group.

10. During 2012/13, a Members Working Party undertook a post-implementation review of the revised governance arrangements agreed in March 2011, to take stock of the new arrangements and how they were working. Following a full consultation exercise, the Working Party concluded that, overall, the new arrangements were operating well, but that there were areas that required modification. Changes were agreed by the Court of Common Council in December 2012.

11. Following the enactment of the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, which abolished the local government standards regime under the Local Government Act 2000, the City is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members. In particular, the Court of Common Council must adopt and publicise a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of Members when they are acting in that capacity. As a code of conduct had to be adopted by 1st July 2012, in order to comply with statutory requirements, the Court of Common Council initially agreed to re-adopt the City's existing code until such time as the regulations defining disclosable pecuniary interest had been made. Following the issue of these regulations, the Court approved a new Code of Conduct in the form suggested by the Department for Communities and Local Government and agreed that, apart from disclosable pecuniary interests, no additional categories of interest would be disclosable.

12. The City must also have in place arrangements under which written allegations of a breach of the Member Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions on those allegations taken. In November 2012, the Standards Committee approved a Complaints Guidance Handbook, including guidelines for dealing with complaints submitted to the Committee. The Committee subsequently agreed the introduction of new voluntary arrangements for the registration of gifts and hospitality received, in response to queries received on that issue since the introduction of the new standards regime.

13. Under section 28 of the Localism Act, the City is required to appoint at least one Independent Person to support the new standards arrangements. In June, the Court of Common Council gave support to three appointments to the position of Independent Person, and also agreed a revised constitution and terms of reference for the Standards Committee, to be adopted from the point that section 28 of the Act came into force.
14. The Localism Act also requires the City to prepare and publish a Pay Policy Statement each year, setting out its approach to pay for the most senior and junior members of staff. The draft Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14 was agreed by the Court of Common Council in March 2013.
15. During 2012/13, the Audit and Risk Management Committee agreed procedures for annual declarations of interest by certain officers, to meet the City's obligations under the Bribery Act 2010. The agreed approach demonstrates a proportionate and pro-active approach, by requiring officers with decision-making powers in relation to higher risk activities to make an annual declaration to confirm that they have met the requirements relating to potential conflicts of interest, as set out in the Employee Code of Conduct, and to confirm that they have not engaged in any conduct which might give rise to an offence under the Bribery Act.
16. As a result of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2011-12, revisions were agreed to the City's policy and procedures in respect of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), which regulates surveillance carried out by public authorities in the conduct of their business. In September 2012, the City was inspected by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners (OSC). The OSC noted that the City had not used RIPA powers since the last inspection (in 2009), and is "well prepared to use them in appropriate circumstances, having taken steps to ensure legislative compliance ...". In December 2012, a number of officers undertook a comprehensive training course to ensure that a high standard of administration and management in respect of the use of RIPA powers is maintained.
17. The Court of Common Council is defined as the police authority for the City of London Police area in accordance with the provisions of the City of London Police Act 1839 and the Police Act 1996. The role of police authority is to ensure the City of London Police runs an effective and efficient service by holding the Commissioner to account; to ensure value for money in the way the police is run; and set policing priorities taking into account the views of the community. These, and other key duties, are specifically delegated to the Police Committee.
18. The legislation that introduced Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels during 2012 does not apply to the City of London; therefore the Court of Common Council will continue to be defined as the police authority for the City of London Police area.

Business Strategy and Planning Process



19. The City has a clear hierarchy of plans, setting out its ambitions and priorities:

- The sustainable community strategy for the City of London (The City Together Strategy: The Heart of a World Class City 2008-2014) is a shared focus for the future, helping to co-ordinate partners' activities towards meeting the needs and aspirations of the City's diverse communities. This was informed by extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and specific interest groups. A Local Strategic Partnership (The City Together) oversees the development of the Community Strategy, which is centred on the Square Mile and the City's local authority and Policing functions.
 - The Corporate Plan shows how the City Corporation will fulfil its role as a provider of services both inside and outside of the City boundaries. The Corporate Plan includes a statement of the City's Vision, Strategic Aims, Key Policy Priorities and Core Values.
 - The City of London Policing Plan details the policing priorities and shows how these will be delivered over the coming year. It also contains all the measures and targets against which the Police Committee hold the City of London Police to account.
 - The Communications Strategy sets out the City's plan of action over the short to medium-term for communicating its activities and managing its reputation. The 2012-15 Strategy identifies two key priorities, namely: supporting London's communities, and helping to look after London's heritage and green spaces.
 - A new Cultural Strategy 2012-2017 for the City was agreed, following extensive consultation and approval from the relevant Committees. This presents a coherent view of the City's important cultural and heritage-related contributions to the life of London and the nation.
 - Other corporate plans and strategies are mentioned elsewhere in this document.
20. Plans and strategies are informed by a range of consultation arrangements, such as City-wide and local residents' meetings, representative user groups and surveys of stakeholders. The City has a unique franchise, giving businesses (our key constituency) a direct say in the running of the City, and a range of engagement activities, including through the Lord Mayor, Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee and the Economic Development Office. An annual consultation meeting is held for business ratepayers.

21. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transferred responsibility for health improvement of local populations to local authorities in England, with effect from 1st April 2013. The new duties include the establishment of a Health and Wellbeing Board, to provide collective leadership to improve health and wellbeing for the local area. A shadow Health and Wellbeing Board for the City of London was formed in response to the Government's expectation that local authorities should be prepared ahead of the implementation of the reforms; this operated throughout 2012/13. In December 2012, the Court of Common Council approved steps to set up a Health and Wellbeing Board, including the terms of reference and membership as at April 2013.

Links to the City of London Corporation's Information Management Strategy

22. The Information Management Strategy (approved October 2009) sets out the headline approach to information management in the City. It summarises the current position, gives a vision of where we want to be and proposes a set of actions to start us on the path to that vision. The Strategy defines our approach to the other key elements for information management, in particular data security and data sharing.
23. Overall responsibility for Information Management Governance is vested in the Information Systems (IS) sub-Committee. The Information Management Governance Board (IMGB) is chaired by the Director of the Built Environment and reports to the IS Strategy Board, which in turn reports to the Performance and Strategy Summit Group of Chief Officers and the IS sub-Committee. The Chief Information Officer was appointed as the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Information Asset Owners (IAO) within departments were identified in spring 2010. The IS Division re-affirms IAO appointments annually.

24. During 2012/13, the City Corporation commenced a tender exercise to select an external partner to deliver the “business as usual” IS function. As part of the transition to the new service provision, revised information management responsibilities will be agreed and the Information Management Strategy will be updated.

Financial Management Arrangements

25. The Chamberlain of London is the officer with statutory responsibility for the proper administration of the City’s financial affairs. In 2010 CIPFA issued a “*Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government*” which codifies the key responsibilities of this role and sets out how the requirements of legislation and professional standards should be met. The City’s financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the Statement. The Chamberlain also fulfils the role of Treasurer of the Police Authority.

26. The system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures (including segregation of duties), management supervision, a system of delegation and accountability, and independent scrutiny. In particular the system includes:

- a rolling in depth survey of the City’s forecast position over a five year period;
- comprehensive budget setting processes;
- monthly, quarterly and annual financial reports which indicate performance against budgets and forecasts;
- access by all departmental and central finance staff to systems providing a suite of enquiries and reports to facilitate effective financial management on an ongoing basis;
- ongoing contact and communication between central finance officers and departmental finance officers;
- clearly defined capital expenditure guidelines;
- formal project management disciplines;
- an in-house internal audit service;
- insuring against specific risks;
- scrutiny by Members, OFSTED, CQC, HMIC, other inspectorates, External Audit and other stakeholders, and
- requests for Members and Chief Officers to disclose related party transactions including instances where their close family have completed transactions with the City of London Corporation.

27. For non-Police services, the Local Government Funding Settlement for 2013/14 and 2014/15 was more severe than anticipated by the local government finance community, and further reductions in Government grant funding are expected for the foreseeable future. These reductions in Government funding are a major factor underlying the potential annual revenue deficits of £5million indicated from 2016/17 in the medium term financial forecast. This figure represents approximately 8% of net spending on services. To address these potential deficits, a service-based activity review will be undertaken to identify: further efficiencies where savings can be made with little impact on services; the appropriate level of expenditure to fulfil statutory requirements; services with less impact on the City’s policy objectives; and funding/income generation opportunities. In addition, targeted/selective budget reductions and efficiency programmes are continuing to be pursued, including those relating to corporate-wide procurement arrangements. The utilisation of assets is also being reviewed to determine whether investment returns can be improved at an acceptable level of risk.

28. The City of London Police manages its budget on a ring-fenced basis, but also faces significant and continuing reductions in Government Grants. The force has its own savings plan, including a new operating model proposed by the City First Change Programme.

29. An Efficiency Board monitors the savings achieved and a Transformation Board is overseeing the change process. The Efficiency and Performance sub-Committee receives regular reports from these two Boards, continues to challenge the achievement of value for money, and helps to embed further a value for money culture within the City's business and planning processes.
30. The Policy and Resources Committee determine the level of the City's own resources to be made available to finance capital projects on the basis of a recommendation from the Resource Allocation sub-Committee. Ordinarily, such projects are financed from capital rather than revenue resources, and major projects from provisions set aside in financial forecasts.
31. The City has a number of procedures in place to ensure that its policies and the principles that underpin them are implemented economically, efficiently and effectively. This framework includes:
 - Financial Strategy. This provides a common base for guiding the City's approach to managing financial resources and includes the pursuit of budget policies that seek to achieve a sustainable level of revenue spending and create headroom for capital investment and policy initiatives;
 - Budget policy. The key policy is to balance current expenditure and current income over the medium term. Both blanket pressure and targeted reviews are applied to encourage Chief Officers to continuously seek improved efficiency and find better ways of working;
 - Annual resource allocation process. This is the framework within which the City makes judgements on adjustments to resource levels and ensures that these are properly implemented;
 - Capital Strategy. This ensures that the City's capital resources are deployed to realise its corporate aims and priorities;
 - Corporate Asset Management Plan. This aims to ensure that the opportunity cost of financial resources tied up in land and buildings is recognised, and that expenditure on the portfolio is directed efficiently and effectively to provide value for money;
 - Capital budget evaluation, management and monitoring. The City has a comprehensive system of controls covering the entire life cycle of capital and major revenue projects; and
 - Treasury Management and Investment Strategies. Setting out the arrangements for the management of the City's investments, cash flows, banking and money market transactions; the effective control of risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.
32. Consideration is given to efficiency during the development and approval stages of all major projects, with expected efficiency gains quantified within reports to Members.
33. Following a review of strategic financial management arrangements, changes have been implemented to further strengthen financial management with the emphasis on the provision of high quality advice across the organisation whilst continuing to maintain sound stewardship of the City Corporation's finances.
34. The performance of the City's financial and property investments are monitored regularly, both in-house and independently, through WM Performance Services and our Independent Investment Adviser (for financial investments) and IPD (property).
35. The Police Performance and Resource Management sub-Committee's responsibilities include overseeing the force's resource management in order to maximise the efficient and effective use of resources to deliver its strategic priorities; and monitoring government and other external agencies' policies and actions relating to police performance.
36. The City's project management and procurement arrangements provide a consistent approach to project management and co-ordination of the portfolio of projects across the organisation. The Projects sub-Committee meets monthly to ensure that projects align with corporate objectives and strategy, and provide value for money. A review of all project management arrangements, conducted one year after the new arrangements were introduced, concluded

that the Project Procedure is fit-for-purpose and required only relatively simple adjustments, which were agreed.

Risk Management

37. The City's Risk Management framework continues to abide by the Risk Management Handbook. This handbook was revised slightly during 2012/13, to incorporate the capture of the risk scores before mitigating controls (Gross Risk), an assessment of the controls in place (Control Evaluation), and the appointment of the new Town Clerk and Chief Executive. The framework continues to align with the key principles of ISO 31000: Risk Management Principles and Guidelines and BS 31100: Risk Management Code of Practice, and defines clearly the roles and responsibilities of officers, senior management and Members. The Handbook emphasises risk management as a key element within the City's systems of corporate governance and establishes a clear protocol for the evaluation of risk and escalation of emerging issues to the appropriate scrutiny level. The framework assists in ensuring that risk management continues to be integrated by Chief Officers within their business and service planning and aligned to departmental objectives.
38. The Strategic Risk Management Group, consisting of senior managers representing all departments, including the City of London Police, meets twice annually. The group is chaired by the Deputy Town Clerk, the officer risk management champion, and is a considerable driver in promoting the application of consistent, systematic risk management practices across the organisation. A Core Team of members of the Strategic Risk Management Group meets at regular intervals throughout the year and provides the central coordination point for the consideration of strategic risk and the evaluation of emerging issues.
39. Actions being taken to mitigate operational risks are monitored by Chief Officers and by the relevant service Committees. Corporate oversight of strategic risk is provided by the Chief Officers' Group and Audit and Risk Management Committee. In addition to receiving quarterly risk update reports, the Audit and Risk Management Committee has adopted a cycle of regular in depth review of individual risks stated on the Strategic Risk Register.
40. During 2012/13, three new risks were added to the Strategic Risk Register: Longer term Financial Uncertainty; a risk capturing a high value exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery; and Data Protection Breaches.

Health & Safety

41. The Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) requires the City as an employer to ensure that it implements systems for the protection of its staff and visitors. During 2012/13, a review of the Corporate Health & Safety Policy was completed. The City's systems are aligned to HSG65, the Health and Safety Executive's guidance document on the essential philosophy of good health and safety. It also fulfills the requirements of the Corporate Manslaughter Act (2007). Its goal is to ensure that safety becomes part of normal business by applying a practical, sensible and common sense approach.
42. Top X (the City's Health & Safety risk management system) has been successfully aligned with the business planning process. During 2012/13, departmental use of the system has improved, helping to ensure that many uncontrolled safety hazards arising from operational processes are identified promptly and controls implemented in a timely manner. Operating alongside the risk management process, it assists in ensuring that specific safety risks are integrated by Chief Officers within their business planning. All departments regularly submit their Top X which is analysed and considered twice a year by the Corporate Health & Safety Committee, now chaired by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. This allows any emerging issue to be managed, and it is envisaged that Top X will also provide the Chief Officers' Group with a corporate strategic oversight of any safety risks.

Business Continuity

43. The Civil Contingencies Act (2004) requires the City, as a Category 1 responder, to maintain plans to ensure that it can continue to exercise its functions in the event of an emergency,

requiring responders to train their staff responsible for business continuity, exercise and test their plans, and review these plans on a regular basis.

44. The City has an overarching Business Continuity Strategy and Framework and each department has their own business continuity arrangements. The disaster recovery solution for the City has now been fully deployed and technical tests have been carried out to ensure its robustness. Both corporate and departmental arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure they align with the relevant risk registers and business objectives. Officers from the different departments share best practice and validate their arrangements through the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Steering Group, which sits on a quarterly basis.
45. Programme management of the City's business continuity management system (BCMS) lies with the Security and Contingency Planning Group, and all departments play a role in it. In preparation for the major events of 2012 (including the Olympic and Paralympic Games), the group delivered a programme of training and exercises for departments to strengthen the existing core business continuity arrangements. All departments reviewed their own plans in light of the potential disruptions associated with these events, allowing the City to ensure the effectiveness of its plans and coordination arrangements. Through the live operations of the City of London Olympic and Paralympic Coordination Centre and the Event Control Room for the Lord Mayor's Show, the City has been able to gain significant confidence that its plans are effective and are consistent with pan-London and national major incident arrangements. Lessons learnt from these events, and the novel requirements enshrined in the new international standard for business continuity (ISO 22301), were fed back into the BCMS and a programme of enhancements is currently under implementation.

Role of Internal Audit

46. Internal Audit plays a central role in providing the required assurance on internal controls through its comprehensive risk-based audit programme, with key risk areas being reviewed annually. This is reinforced by consultation with Chief Officers and departmental heads on perceived risk and by a rigorous follow-up audit and spot checks regime.
47. The internal audit process is supported, monitored and managed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee in accordance with CIPFA's *Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities*. Revised Internal Audit Terms of Reference were agreed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee in September 2012, to include codification of the existing internal audit reporting lines.
48. The Internal Audit Section operates under the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom 2006 (CIPFA Code). During 2012/13, the annual internal review of the effectiveness of the Section in relation to the CIPFA Code has found that the Section is fully compliant with the Code. In 2010 CIPFA issued a "Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations" which codifies the key responsibilities of this role and sets out how the requirements of legislation and professional standards should be met. The City's Head of Internal Audit arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the Statement.
49. The new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) came into effect on 1st April 2013. These standards are mandatory and will underpin the Internal Audit arrangements within the City of London Corporation. Implementation of the PSIAS for the City will require very few changes to existing processes, which have been based on the previous CIPFA Code. The Head of Audit and Risk Management will be expected to report on conformance with the PSIAS in his annual report from the year 2013/14.
50. The Audit and Risk Management Committee oversees a targeted approach to the follow-up and implementation of high priority audit recommendations to ensure the internal control environment is maintained.
51. The fraud investigation function continues to be effective, to exceed national targets for housing benefit fraud sanctions and to conduct a wide range of anti-fraud activities. The Audit and Risk Management Committee is now provided with six-monthly progress reports on the

strategic pro-active anti-fraud plan, with investigation activity update reports presented to intervening meetings.

Performance Management

52. The corporate business planning framework sets out the planning cycle with clear linkages between the different levels of policy, strategy, target setting, planning and action (the “Golden Thread”).
- All departments are required to produce annual departmental business plans for approval by the relevant service committee(s). These are all clearly linked to the overall Corporate Plan and show key objectives aligned with financial and staffing resources
 - All departments are required to report quarterly to their service committees with progress against their business plan objectives and with financial monitoring information.
 - Regular performance monitoring meetings are held by the Deputy Town Clerk with selected Chief Officers.
 - Performance and Development Appraisals are carried out for all staff, using a standard set of core behaviours. The appraisals are used to set individual objectives and targets and to identify learning and development needs that are linked to business needs. From 2009/10, pay progression has been linked to performance assessments under the appraisal process.
53. Performance is communicated to Council Tax and Business Rate payers through the City-wide residents’ meetings, the annual business ratepayers’ consultation meeting and regular electronic and written publications, including an annual summary of performance and accounts.
54. During 2012/13, best practice guidance was issued to Chief Officers on quarterly reporting to service committees and on the inclusion of an annual assurance statement on data quality within year-end performance reports.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

55. The Audit and Risk Management Committee is an enhanced source of scrutiny and assurance over the City’s governance arrangements. It considers and approves internal and external audit plans, receives reports from the Head of Audit and Risk Management, external audit and other relevant external inspectorates, including HMIC, as to the extent that the City can rely on its system of internal control. The Committee reviews the financial statements of the City prior to recommending approval by the Finance Committee and considers the formal reports, letters and recommendations of the City’s external auditors. The Committee also monitors and oversees the City’s Risk Management Handbook. The Committee undertakes a systematic programme of detailed reviews of each of the risks on the City’s Strategic Risk Register.
56. During 2012/13, a review of the effectiveness of the Committee was conducted, in accordance with best practice, identified by CIPFA and the City’s external auditors. The analysis undertaken, and a survey of Members of the Committee, showed that the Committee is substantially compliant with the CIPFA Audit Committee best practice guidelines. Items to be addressed were: training; the provision of assurances to the Committee on the operation of risk management and anti-fraud and corruption measures at the departmental level; and the frequency and timetabling of meetings.

Review of Effectiveness

57. The City has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the internal auditors and managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
58. Processes that have applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework include scrutiny primarily by the Policy and Resources, Finance, Police, Audit and Risk Management, Investment, and Standards Committees; and the Resource Allocation,

Police Performance and Resource Management and Efficiency and Performance sub-Committees.

59. This review of the main elements of the City's governance framework has not identified any significant issues for reporting to senior management.

Head of Internal Audit's Opinion

60. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the UK 2006 ("the CIPFA Code") requires the Head of Internal Audit to provide a written report to those charged with governance timed to support the Annual Governance Statement. The Head of Internal Audit is satisfied that sufficient quantity and coverage of internal audit work and other independent assurance work has been undertaken to allow him to draw a reasonable conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the City's risk management, control and governance processes. In his opinion, the City has adequate and effective systems of internal control in place to manage the achievement of its objectives. In giving this opinion he has noted that assurance can never be absolute and, therefore, only reasonable assurance can be provided that there are no major weaknesses in these processes.

61. Notwithstanding his overall opinion, internal audit's work identified a number of opportunities for improving controls and procedures, which management has accepted and are documented in each individual audit report. Timeliness in the implementation of priority audit recommendations has improved during the year, although implementation according to the originally agreed timescales is often not achieved. The new Strategic Risk Management arrangements have become embedded during the year. Opportunities exist for enhancing the operation of the risk management framework across the organisation; an improvement programme is being progressed.

62. One area for particular attention is highlighted in the internal audit opinion relating to the controls operating within some areas of Community and Children's Services: focused management attention is required in relation to the control of client individual budgets, child care provision, housing responsive maintenance and the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Future Developments

63. The governance framework is constantly evolving due to service and regulatory developments and assessments. Improvement plans have been compiled in response to the reports and assessments summarised above. Controls to manage principal risks are constantly monitored, in particular for services with statutory responsibilities for the safety of vulnerable people. The City proposes over the coming year to take the following steps to maintain, develop and strengthen the existing governance framework:

- Reviewing the Scheme of Delegations to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose;
- Reviewing future arrangements for the City's Local Strategic Partnership;
- Conducting a detailed review of the Corporate Plan, including consultation with Members;
- Developing a protocol for consultation with external stakeholders;
- Consulting on, and agreeing, a revised IS Strategy;
- Implementing a service-based review process, to generate further efficiency savings in response to reductions in government grant;
- Reviewing the level of cash reserves to ascertain whether investments could be re-allocated to other higher yielding asset classes, such as property;
- Embedding the City Of London Procurement Service arrangements, so that procurement and payment efficiencies from, and compliance with, a centralised service are realised;
- Commissioning an independent review of the effectiveness of risk management processes and controls;

- Implementing the risk management improvement plan, to strengthen and raise awareness of risk management across all areas of the City Corporation; and
- Amending existing internal audit processes, in accordance with the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

This annual governance statement was approved by the City's Audit and Risk Management Committee on 25th June 2013.

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date:

Mark Boleat
Chairman, Policy and Resources
Committee
Date: