

**Audit and Standards Committee**  
**Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

10 June 2021

**Recommendations**

That the Committee:

1. Endorses the draft Annual Governance Statement at Appendix 1 for onwards consideration by the Council's external auditors.

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the authority to conduct a review, at least once in a year, of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 1.2 The Draft AGS at Appendix A has been informed by input from a cross-council AGS Evaluation Panel in April, the Value for Money Working Group and oversight by the AD Governance & Policy (as Monitoring Officer), AD Finance (Deputy S151 Officer).
- 1.3 The Draft AGS represents the governance framework as operating throughout 2020-21 as follows:
  - Actions delivered as part of the council's COVID response are captured in Section 3 against each of the governance principles along with an overview of compliance against each of the principles;
  - Section 4 details any in-year improvements we have made to governance arrangements, assurances we have gained and a read across to governance principles; and
  - Governance issues and challenges, Section 5, reflects the highest rated strategic risks updated by Corporate Board in February 2021 and an overview of risk mitigation.
- 1.4 It has been assessed by the AGS evaluation and assurance gathering process, that there are no significant governance issues or governance failures to report.

## **2. Financial Implications**

2.1 None

## **3. Environmental Implications**

3.1 None

## **4. Supporting Information**

4.1 The AGS is produced in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016). The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance underpins the AGS and sets out the seven core principles of governance and the Council's governance arrangements against each principal. An updated Local Code of Corporate Governance was endorsed by the Audit and Standards Committee in March and by Cabinet in April 2021.

4.2 The 2020-21 AGS aims to complement the governance arrangements detailed in the Local Code of Corporate Governance. It should be an open and honest self assessment of the organisation's performance over the year and key challenges against these principles.

4.3 Assistant Directors and the Director of Public Health have completed assurance statements, confirming their understanding and compliance with the Council's approach to the management of risk and good governance in their services.

## **5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

5.1 The timetable for producing an approved draft AGS for public inspection and then publication, complies with the amended Accounts & Audit Regulations with key timings being:

- Corporate Board endorsed the draft 2020-21 AGS for consideration by the Audit & Standards Committee;
- Following consideration and endorsement by the Audit & Standards Committee, the draft 2020-21 AGS will be shared with our external auditors at the end of June; and
- The final AGS, incorporating any required post audit amendments, will be presented to Audit & Standards and Cabinet in September 2021 to recommend for approval by Full Council in October 2021.

## Appendices

1. Appendix 1 Draft 2020-21 Annual Governance Statement
2. Appendix 2 Guidance on Determining Significant Governance Issues

## Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: