

Audit and Standards Committee

30 November 2023

Final Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Recommendation

That the Committee endorses the Final Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23, held at Appendix 1, and recommends its approval by full Council at their December meeting and subsequent inclusion in the Council's 2022/23 Annual Report and Accounts.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to conduct a review, at least once a year, of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 1.2 The Draft AGS has been informed by input from colleagues from across the Council and oversight has been provided by the Director of Finance (Assistant Director of Finance to 30th September 2023) (Deputy Section 151 Officer).
- 1.3 The AGS represents the governance framework and how it operated throughout 2022/2023. The Draft AGS has been considered by Corporate Board and the Audit and Standards Committee meeting in May 2023. It has also been published for a period of public consultation. External Audit has considered the AGS and no adjustments have been required. Additionally, no comments from members of the public have been received.

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 Code of Corporate Governance underpins the AGS and sets out the seven

core principles of governance and the Councils arrangements against each principal.

- 4.2 The Council's Code of Corporate Governance was updated in 2021 and approved by Cabinet in April 2021 and has been in operation throughout 2022/23. The full details of our current code and how we meet the seven Principles of Good Governance can be found on our website here: <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/corporategovernance>.
- 4.3 The AGS aims to compliment the governance arrangements detailed in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. It presents an open and honest self-assessment of the Council's performance over the year and key challenges against these principles. The AGS provides an update against improvements which were required during the year. Improvement action that the Council plans to take in 2023/24 is also included for the Committee to view.
- 4.4 In line with good practice, Directors have completed assurance statements at the year end, confirming their understanding and compliance with the Council's approach to the management of risk and good governance in their services.
- 4.5 The Draft AGS was initially presented to the Audit & Standards Committee in May 2023. Since then, there have been no questions or comments received from members of the public and no amendments falling due from the external audit work. We have reconsidered the document again in advance of this meeting making minor amendments, which are shared with the Committee.
- 4.6 The AGS reflects the position, role titles and content relevant to the governance arrangements that were in place during 2022/23. The Governance Improvement Plan for 2023/24 has been updated to reflect the role titles, which became effective in October 2023. Two additional challenges, which started to emerge towards the end of 2022-23 have been added to Section 5, Governance issues and challenges.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 The timetable for producing an approved AGS for public inspection and then publication, complies with the Accounts & Audit Regulations with key timings being:
 - Corporate Board endorsed the draft 2022/23 AGS for consideration by Audit & Standards Committee in May 2023;
 - Following consideration and endorsement by the Audit & Standards Committee, the draft 2022/23 AGS was shared with the Council's External Auditor and issued for public consultation; and
 - The Final AGS, which would have taken account of any required post audit amendments, is presented to Audit & Standards in November 2023 seeking a recommendation for approval by Full Council in December 2023.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Final Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Background Papers

None

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

Local Member(s): not applicable – county wide report

Other members: