

Audit and Standards Committee

23 May 2024

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Recommendation

That the Audit and Standards Committee endorses the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 (AGS), at Appendix 1, for publishing and issuing to the Council's External Auditor.

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 AGS 2023/24 has been informed by input from colleagues from across the Council and oversight has been provided by the Interim Director for Finance (Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer).
- 1.3 The AGS represents the governance framework as operating throughout 2023/24 and it has been considered and commented on by Corporate Board, who have recommended the draft to be shared with the Audit and Standards Committee.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 None arising directly from this report.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 None arising directly from this report.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The AGS is produced in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance underpins the AGS and sets out the seven core principles of governance and the Council's arrangements against each principle.

- 4.2 The Council's Code of Corporate Governance was updated in 2021, approved by Cabinet in April 2021 and has been in operation throughout 2023/24. 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 2024/25 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. Directors have also contributed and added to the content of the AGS.

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 AGS for consideration by Audit & Standards Committee;
 - Following consideration and endorsement by the Audit & Standards Committee, the AGS will be published for public consultation/comment and shared with the Council's External Auditor; and
 - The Final AGS, incorporating any required post audit amendments, will be presented to Audit & Standards and Cabinet towards the end of 2024, in line with the accounts, to recommend for approval by Full Council thereafter.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Background Papers

None.

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

Local Member(s): None – this is a County wide report

Other members: Chair & Spokes of Resources OSC