

23RD MAY 2024

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT – 2023/24

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 for review and approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are requested to approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2017 the Council adopted a revised Code of Corporate Governance prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/ SOLACE framework document entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016 Edition)'.
- 1.2 Regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, provides that each financial year the Council must:
 - a) Conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control; and
 - b) Prepare an annual governance statement.
- 1.3 The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) should be reviewed and approved by this Committee prior to being signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader. The statement will then be published alongside the Statement of Accounts.

2 What is the Annual Governance Statement

- 2.1 The Council is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare and publish an AGS, in order to report publicly on the extent to which we comply with our own Local Code of Corporate Governance, including how we have monitored the effectiveness of our arrangements in the year and on any planned changes to our governance arrangements in the coming year.
- 2.2 The Committee provides essential support for the approval of the AGS and for ensuring that good governance is embedded throughout the Council's activities.

3 Methodology for compiling the AGS

- 3.1 The existing governance arrangements against the CIPFA/ SOLACE: 'Delivering good governance in Local Government framework – 2016 Edition' have been reviewed.
- 3.2 Assurance statements were obtained from Heads of Service to demonstrate how governance arrangements within their service meet the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for good governance.
- 3.3 Furthermore, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Corporate Governance Group (CGG) has reviewed the AGS to ensure all governance arrangements have been reflected within the statement.
- 3.4 Actions to improve the governance arrangements are detailed within the AGS. Work undertaken towards implementing these actions will be regularly reviewed by the CGG and updates on the progress will be reported to this Committee.
- 3.5 The AGS for 2023/24 is contained within Appendix A of this report and the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance is contained within Appendix B.

4. Requirements of the Committee

- 4.1 To ensure a meaningful review of the AGS, this Committee should draw on its knowledge of the governance arrangements established and how they have operated during the course of the year, including:
 - Reviewing the Local Code of Corporate Governance which is contained within Appendix B of this report;
 - Ensure that the AGS is underpinned by a framework of assurance, which has been set out within the AGS;
 - Assurances provided by Internal Audit throughout the course of the year for the application of governance arrangements in practice and the monitoring of recommendations to improve governance arrangements; and
 - Consider how the Council applies governance principles in practice based on other agenda items reviewed by the Committee throughout the year.
- 4.2 The Committee needs to be satisfied that the AGS contained in appendix A properly reflects the governance environment and any actions required to

improve it and demonstrates how governance supports the achievement of the Council's objectives.

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References: CIPFA/ SOLACE framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016 Edition)