

21st NOVEMBER 2024

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - UPDATE

SUMMARY:

This report describes the work carried out towards the implementation of the actions defined within the Annual Governance Statement, which was presented to this Committee in May 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members are requested to:

- i. Note the progress towards the implementation of the actions detailed within the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). Reporting 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. The AGS was reported to this Committee on 23rd May 2024.
- 1.2 The review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework in 2023/24 identified areas for improvement to be actioned during 2024/25, which included the carried forward actions from the 2022/23 AGS. The progress against these actions is detailed within this report.

2 Progress towards actions within the Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

- 2.1 Members considered the AGS report (AUD24/04) which included actions to be implemented during 2024/25, in response to Governance improvements identified in the AGS 2023/24.
- 2.2 The table below details the progress to date of items carried forward:

Actions outstanding from 2022/23

Action from 22/23 AGS	Original target date	Last update from May 2024	Revised target date	Update November 2024	Revised target date	Direction of travel
<p>Lack of robustness for the response to FOI requests resulting in the ICO judging against the Council due to lack of prompt response rather than the actual decision made not to provide certain information.</p> <p><i>(Corporate Manager – Legal Services)</i></p>	October 2023	The initial scoping of work has been completed with the full work programme of moving to MS lists later in the year (September 2024 onwards).	N/A	The new MS List system came into place and was fully functioning by July 2024.	N/A	Completed

Actions outstanding from 2023/24

Action from 23/24 AGS	Original target date	Last update from May 2024	Revised target date	Update November 2024	Revised target date	Direction of travel
<p>Following the changes in political control in May there are likely to be shifts in priorities which may require existing governance arrangements to be reviewed. This will be taken forward by the ELT supported by the governance group.</p> <p>Existing arrangements will have new appointments and training and briefing will be required for new appointees to be able to undertake governance roles effectively</p>	<p>September 2024</p> <p>As soon as practicable in new Civic year</p>	N/A – New action	N/A	As a result of the Corporate Peer Challenge and the CIPFA report the Council has commissioned a review of some elements of its committee and governance arrangements. This report will be considered once completed. The report will be considered in January 2025 with any changes agreed being brought in from May 2025.	<p>Report – January 2025</p> <p>Changes (if required) May 2025</p>	<p>Progressing</p> <p>↑</p>
<p>The governance actions which transpire from the CIPFA review will be actioned accordingly.</p>	TBC when actions from the report agreed	N/A – New action	N/A	A Financial Resilience Plan has been agreed which incorporate actions from the CIPFA review and the peer challenge. Work towards the plan is regularly reviewed by ELT.	Ongoing	<p>Progressing</p> <p>↑</p>
<p>A self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code will be carried out.</p> <p>The actions resulting from the self-assessment will be carried out to ensure compliance with the code.</p>	<p>September 2024</p> <p>September 2025</p>	N/A – New action	N/A	The self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code is still to be carried out. However, this does in part form the wider review currently being carried out around governance/ financial resilience plan.	September 2025	<p>No change but further action planned as part of a wider piece of work.</p> <p>↔</p>

Action from 23/24 AGS	Original target date	Last update from May 2024	Revised target date	Update November 2024	Revised target date	Direction of travel
A self-assessment against the seven characteristics of good governance has been carried out by the Corporate Governance Group. Actions arising from this review will be taken forward to improve any governance gaps.	TBC when actions agreed	N/A – New action	N/A	The self-assessment has been further reviewed with 2 high priority actions being brought forward for review by ELT and the Corporate Governance Group. This review has been further enhanced with the peer challenge and CIPFA report.	December 2024	Progressing ↑

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References:

- *Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 – reported to CGAS Committee 23rd May 2024*