

Report to Audit Committee

19th December 2019

By the Director of Corporate Resources

INFORMATION REPORT



Not exempt

Annual Governance Statement – Review of Action Plan 2019/20

Executive Summary

The annual review of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements has been undertaken to support the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19. This review included information and assurance gathering processes to ensure that the published Annual Governance Statement is correct as well as a review of the Council's Governance framework against the best practice framework devised by CIPFA/SOLACE. The Annual Governance Statement was approved at the Audit Committee on 11th July 2019.

The aim of the review process is to ensure that the Council has effective governance, risk management and internal control processes in place to assist with accountability and the delivery of objectives. Additionally, the review process has identified any shortfalls in these arrangements to enable them to be addressed. These areas for improvement are listed in Appendix A and have been reviewed and updated to show the progress to date.

Recommendations

That the Committee is recommended:

- i) To note the revised AGS Action Plan 2019/20.

Reasons for Recommendations

- i) As part of good governance, it is important that the improvement actions are reviewed, progressed and completed.

Background Papers: Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

Consultation: The Senior Leadership Team and Monitoring Officer.

Wards affected: All

Contact: Julie McKenzie Project Assurance Manager, 01403-215306

Attachments:

Appendix A: AGS Action Plan 2019/20

Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require the Council to review, at least annually, the effectiveness of its governance arrangements and publish an Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.2 Senior officers have been consulted and supporting documentation has been updated to reflect the current position.

2 Relevant Council Policy

The Audit Committee is responsible for approving the Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference.

3 Details

- 3.1 The Annual Governance Statement - Action Plan 2019/20 is attached in Appendix A.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the revised Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2019/20 at the December meeting.

5 Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 Key officers have been consulted when reviewing and updating the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan including the Senior Leadership Team and the Monitoring Officer.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 None.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 There are no direct staffing consequences arising from this report.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 Regulation 6 of The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 requires that:-

6.—(1) A relevant authority must, each financial year—

- (a) conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control required by regulation 3; and
- (b) prepare an annual governance statement;

(2) If the relevant authority referred to in paragraph (1) is a Category 1 authority, following the review, it must—

(a) consider the findings of the review required by paragraph (1)(a)—

(i) by a committee; or

(ii) by members of the authority meeting as a whole; and

(b) approve the annual governance statement prepared in accordance with paragraph (1)(b) by resolution of—

(i) a committee; or

(ii) members of the authority meeting as a whole.

8.2 In 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE published a revised framework for Corporate Governance: "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework". This framework provides a useful and practical update and follows seven core principles of good governance. The Framework urges local authorities to review and report on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements.

9 Risk Assessment

9.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

10 Other Considerations

10.1 This report has no effect on Crime & Disorder; Human Rights; Equality & Diversity or Sustainability.