

Report to Audit Committee

16th December 2020

By the Director of Corporate Resources



INFORMATION REPORT

Not exempt

Annual Governance Statement – Review of Action Plan 2020/21

Executive Summary

The annual review of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements was completed in the spring leading to the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20. This review included information and assurance gathering processes to ensure that the published Annual Governance Statement was 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 15th July 2020.

This report reviews progress against the Action Plan at midway through the year. Appendix A shows the progress to date.

Recommendations

That the Committee is recommended:

- i) To note the progress against the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2020/21.

Reasons for Recommendations

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

Background Papers: None

Wards affected: All

Contact: Dominic Bradley, Head of Finance and Performance.

Attachments:

Appendix A: AGS Action Plan 2020/21

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 are consulted and supporting documentation provided to prepare the document. This report reviews progress against the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan.

2 Relevant Council Policy

- 2.1 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 2020/21 is attached in Appendix A. This has been updated for progress to 25 November 2020.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress against the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2020/21.

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 resource 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.

