



**Governance and Audit  
Committee**

**Tuesday, 21 January 2025**

**Subject: Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024**

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To present to Members the Annual Governance  
Statement for 2023-24 for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Members review the updated Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 and provide approval for its inclusion within the 2023-24 Financial Statements.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:** The Annual Governance Statement complies with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. The draft annual governance statement must be published with the statement of accounts as part of the period of Audit and Inspection, this requirement has been complied with.

### **Financial: FIN/27/24/PD**

There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, the Annual Governance Statement does make reference to the sufficiency of the Annual Finance Settlement received from Government, CIPFA Financial Management Code and Internal Systems of Financial Control.

**Staffing:** There are no staffing implications arising from this report. However, the report does make reference to the Corporate Risk Register which notes the risk of the loss of key staff.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

There are no implications arising from this report.

### **Data Protection Implications:**

There are no implications arising from this report.

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

No specific or direct climate related risks and opportunities.

### **Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

There are no implications arising from this report.

### **Health Implications:**

There are no implications arising from this report.

### **Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :**

The Draft Annual Governance Statement Report was considered by the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 June 2023.

### **Risk Assessment:**

The statement makes reference to the Strategic Risk Register. This risk register will be reviewed by the Committee at the meeting this report is being brought to.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require every council to agree and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 1.2 The system of corporate governance is the way in which we direct and control our services and functions to ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation and directives, that officers and Members demonstrate good behaviours, and the Council makes sound and compliant decisions.
- 1.3 Assurance of governance arrangements involves a process to test the framework and to gain confidence that it is operating as intended and that we are, '...doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in an open, honest, inclusive and timely manner'. (CIPFA 2007)
- 1.4 The AGS includes a summary of the governance framework and identifies those areas where further action is required to achieve greater assurance.
- 1.5 The report refers to the governance framework in place for the financial year ended 31 March 2024. However, it is only reviewed by the auditors post year-end and signed off at the same time as the financial statements are approved with the audit opinion. The statement refers to the controls in place during the year but has been updated to reflect the political make-up at the date of signing.

## **2. Developing The Annual Governance Statement 2023-24**

- 2.1 Sources of information used to develop the AGS include:
  - The Combined Assurance Report 2023-24
  - Internal Audit Annual Report
  - Internal Audit reports
  - The management of Strategic and Service risks
  - External Audit Annual Audit Letter
  - Review of Comments, Compliments and Complaints
  - Consultation results
  - Ombudsman investigations
  - Review of Whistleblowing
  - Annual review of fraud
  - Comments made by the external Auditors.
- 2.2 The draft AGS was considered by the 11 June 2024 Governance and Audit Committee and Members of the Committee were encouraged to both provide comments in the meeting and by correspondence to the Director of Corporate Services. No comments further to the meeting have been received.
- 2.3 The draft AGS was also considered by the Council's Management Team prior to this Governance and Audit Audit Committee.

- 2.4 Following approval of the Annual Governance Statement by the Governance and Audit Committee both the Leader and Chief Executive will sign the statement prior to publication.

### **3 The Framework**

- 3.1 The Governance Framework follows the seven principles of good governance as set out in CIPFA's "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework" (2016 edition) and is formed by the systems and processes, standards, policies and activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community.

### **4. Annual Governance Statement 2023-24**

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 accompanies this report. Members are asked to consider it and approve it for signature and inclusion within the financial statements.
- 4.2 A report will be brought to each Governance and Audit Committee following approval; providing details of actions taken and progress made in addressing risks included in the statement.

### **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members:

Review the updated Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 and provide approval for its inclusion within the 2023-24 Financial Statements