Governance and Audit Committee
21 July 2026

Subject: (DRAFT) Annual Governance Statement 2025 - 2026

Report by:	Assistant Chief Executive Governance Monitoring Officer
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Executive Summary:

To present to the Governance and Audit Committee a copy of the DRAFT Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26 for review and comments

Appendices to Report

- Appendix 1- DRAFT Annual Governance Statement

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) That members review the DRAFT Annual Governance Statement for 2025-26 and provide any comments

1. Introduction

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, in an open, honest, inclusive and timely manner.

1.4 The AGS includes a summary of the governance framework and identifies those areas where further action is required to achieve greater assurance.

2 Developing the Annual Governance Statement 2025-26

2.1 This Draft version will be considered, and various sources of information will be used to develop it, which include: -

- The Combined Assurance Report 2024-25
- 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 Members of the Committee are encouraged to provide comments during and after the meeting if needed, by correspondence to the Monitoring Officer or the Section 151 Officer. The Council's Leadership Team will also consider updated versions of the document prior to the final version being published.

2.3 The final version of the Annual Governance Statement will be brought back to this Committee for consideration in the Autumn, prior to final publication.

2.4 The Governance Framework follows the seven principles of good governance as set out in CIPFA's "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework" (updated version May 2025) and is formed by the systems and processes, standards, policies and activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community.

2.5 Officers have established an internal Corporate Governance Group which will consider the AGS and monitor the actions contained within it.

Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	To not consider a draft AGS	This would not align with good governance principles, as the Council must publish a final AGS and Committee members must have the opportunity to review and contribute to its development.

ASSOCIATED 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,

Financial:

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

Local Government Reorganisation implications:

There are no direct LGR implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

None directly arising from this report.

Data Protection Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None directly arising from this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None directly arising from this report.

Health Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Risk Assessment:

N/A

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
N/A

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**	**x**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**x**