

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 10 May 2023

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Audit & Governance Committee notes the update on the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

Executive Summary

2. The Audit & Governance Committee has the responsibility of approving the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) each year.
3. Local authorities are required to prepare an AGS to be transparent about their compliance with good governance principles. This includes reporting on how they have monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the previous year and setting out any planned changes in the coming period.

Format of the Annual Governance Statement

4. The format of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) reflects the good practice guidance from CIPFA. It should refer to any significant impacts and adaptations in the year.

The AGS includes:

- An *opinion* on the Council's governance arrangements from the Council's senior managers and the leader of the Council
 - A review of the *effectiveness* of the Council's governance arrangements
 - A *conclusion* in relation to the effectiveness
 - A review of the *action plan* from last year's statement
 - An *action plan for 2023/24*
 - An *annex* summarising our governance framework
5. The AGS is being prepared by the Council's Corporate Governance Assurance Group (CGAG) which is responsible for monitoring the Council's governance arrangements during the year.
 6. The Council's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) have been asked to reflect on their own view of the governance within their services during 2022/2023, whilst also having regard to the detail contained in a set of corporate lead statements as prepared by service leads, and responses received from the Council's

Extended Leadership Team (ELT) to a Governance Assurance Assessment Questionnaire, when completing their own Director Certificates of Assurance.

7. The Chief Executive has requested that further work be carried out by SLT before the Annual Governance Statement is brought back to the Committee for approval. Each member of SLT has been asked to work with their directorate and corporate services, as appropriate, to review the assurance assessments in their directorate and to determine required actions for the AGS action plan. SLT will then confirm their final assurance position by 31 May 2023.

Conclusion

8. The Committee is asked to note this update ahead of receiving the Annual Governance Statement on 19 July 2023.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance
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Legal Implications

10. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require councils to undertake an annual review of their governance. The Regulations state that the Annual Governance Statement should be prepared in accordance with proper practices. Compliance with the CIPFA guidance (*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)*) fulfils this requirement. The Regulations also require that an Annual Governance Statement should form part of the Council's Statement of Accounts. The AGS will come before the Committee in July to meet this purpose and fulfil the requirement for annual review.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal, and Deputy Monitoring Officer
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Staff Implications

11. There are no direct staff implications arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

12. There are no direct equality and inclusion implications arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

13. There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

14. There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

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