

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Tracy Bingham Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer	
<b>Background Papers</b>	None	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To present the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 for consideration and approval.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>THAT THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (AS ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT AT APPENDIX A) BE APPROVED</b>	

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 An Annual Governance Statement is a requisite part of the annual review of corporate governance and good practice dictates that the document is published alongside the statement of accounts, but is considered in its own right.
- 1.2 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) issue joint annual guidance on corporate governance, which encourages Local Authorities in going beyond consideration of the internal control environment to look at wider arrangements for supporting sound corporate governance.
- 1.3 The CIPFA/SOLACE guidance outlines seven core principles for good governance, with a number of supporting principles. These seven principles are:
- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
  - B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
  - C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
  - D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcome.
  - E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it achievement of the intended outcomes.
  - F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
  - G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 1.4 The Council's duty in respect of the Annual Governance Statement is to undertake an annual review of its governance arrangements, which includes the effectiveness of its system of internal control and produce a statement regarding its overall level of governance.

## 2. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 2.1 To undertake the annual review, an assessment of the Council's governance framework against the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance has been undertaken with the Corporate Leadership Team to arrive at an assessment score of either:
- Good - Good governance exists and there are no improvements required
  - Fair - Satisfactory governance exists but improvements are required to meet good governance

- Poor - Significant issues with governance exists which need addressing

2.2 The review is documented with details of evidence included in the Annual Governance Statement document and is approved by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.

### **3. THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

3.1 The 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement has been subject to audit and requires final approval from this Committee.

3.2 The Council's governance framework and how we have complied with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework is summarised in Section 3 of the statement and was in place throughout 2019/20.

3.3 Section 4 summarises the review the effectiveness of the Council's governance, including details of any significant issues or areas for improvement which have arisen from the review of effectiveness, and proposals for addressing them.

3.4 There were no significant issues identified for 2019/20. Three improvements identified through the Annual Governance Statement review in 2018/19 have been carried forward for completion and there have been two new improvements identified. The total five improvements are summarised in Table 2 of the Annual Governance Statement.

3.5 Evidence gathered throughout the review is detailed as an appendix to the statement.

3.6 Progress against improvement areas will continue to be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. Additionally, the Annual Governance Statement of future years will report on the progress/completion of improvements areas or significant issues from the prior period.

3.7 Finally, section 5 of the statement details that the overall opinion and conclusion. For 2019/20 this is that the council is satisfied that appropriate governance arrangements are in place.

3.8 Following Audit and Governance Committee approval, the final Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader and subsequently published on the Council's website.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	Effective organisational governance underpins the delivery of all council priorities.
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	None
Equalities/Diversity:	None
Customer Impact:	None
Economic and Social Impact:	None
Environment and Climate Change:	None
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None
Risks:	Failure to produce an accurate and comprehensive Annual Governance Statement could result in adverse comment from the External Auditor and failure to comply with current guidance.
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