

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

Head of Service:	Gillian McTaggart, Head of Policy, Performance & Governance
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Summary

This report seeks the Committee's approval of the draft Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Approve the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement as set out at Appendix 1, prior to it being signed by the Chief Executive and the Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee.**
- (2) Give delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make any required amendments to the Annual Governance Statement prior to its submission with the Statement of Accounts.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council must prepare an annual statement which covers its whole internal control environment. This statement, the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) forms part of the annual financial statements.

2 Background

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- 2.1 Our governance arrangements aim to ensure that we set and meet objectives, act lawfully, openly and honestly. In addition, all monies and resources are accounted for, safeguarded and used efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2 The AGS is an important document which provides assurance concerning these governance arrangements, both financial and non-financial. It is prepared on an annual basis for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts. Before the Chief Executive and Chairmen of Strategy & Resources Committee certifies the statement it is presented to the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee for approval.
- 2.3 The draft AGS 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1. This statement has been drafted by the Head of Policy, Performance and Governance in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive. The Leadership Team contributes through the Divisional Assurance Statements. The Head of Internal Audit's opinion is included and provides independent assurance over the systems of internal control.
- 2.4 The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on governance issues and so has been captured within the draft AGS.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

3.1.1 There are no specific equality implications associated with this report.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 There are no specific safeguarding implications associated with this report.

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 Before final publication of the AGS and audit accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021, the AGS must have been certified by the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee. This follows consideration of the draft statement by the Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee.

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3.4.2 The content of the AGS is, in part, dependent upon the findings of the Head of Internal Audit's Annual Opinion 2020/21.

3.5 Other

3.5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising through the preparation and publication of the AGS.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 In order to comply with Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council must prepare and approve an Annual Governance Statement.

5.2 Regulation 10 of the 2015 regulations requires the Council to publish the AGS alongside the adopted statement of accounts.

5.3 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

6.1.1 Effective Council – Engaging, responsive and resilient Council.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** no relevance for the purposes of this report.

6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** no relevance for the purposes of this report.

6.5 **Partnerships:** not applicable.

7 Background papers

7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

Audit, Crime and Disorder and Scrutiny
Committee
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- Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee, 17 September 2020

Other papers:

- Internal Audit Plan 2020/21, Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee 19 November 2020
- Internal Audit Progress Report, Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee, 19 November 2020 and 8 April 2021
- Annual Governance Statement and External Audit Findings, Audit, Crime & Disorder and Scrutiny Committee, 8 April 2021