

## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022-2023**

<b>Head of Service:</b>	Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	(All Wards)
<b>Urgent Decision? (yes/no)</b>	No
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices (attached):</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> - Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023

### **Summary**

This report seeks the Committee's approval of the draft Annual Governance Statement 2022-2023.

### **Recommendation (s)**

**The Committee is asked to:**

- (1) Approve the 2022-2023 draft Annual Governance Statement as set out at Appendix 1, prior to it being signed by the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Strategy and 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 appraises its internal control environment. This is referred to as the Annual Governance Statement (**AGS**), and 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; and do the right things in the right way. In addition, these arrangements also create a framework in which 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 our 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 Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee certifies the statement, it is presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee for approval.
- 2.3 The draft AGS 2022-2023 is attached at Appendix 1. This statement has been prepared in consultation with senior management (via Divisional Assurance Statements), and the three statutory officers: Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Chief Finance and Section 151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer. The Chief Internal Auditor's opinion is included in the AGS, which provides independent assurance over our systems of internal control and risk management.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

#### Legal or other duties

##### 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment

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

##### 3.2 Crime & Disorder

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

##### 3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 There are no direct 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 2023 the AGS must be certified by the Chief Executive and Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee. This follows consideration of the draft statement by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

3.4.2 The content of the AGS is, in part, dependent upon the findings of the Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion report. This is expected to be published in the same meeting of Audit and Scrutiny Committee as this one.

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### 3.5 Other

3.5.1 There are no other implications with this report. Although notably, the report is a form of risk assessment as it provides the council's assessment of its own governance and systems of internal control. Where improvements have been identified, they are listed in the AGS's action plan

## 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 (AGS). Regulation 10 of the 2015 regulations requires the council to publish the AGS alongside the adopted statement of accounts.

5.2 **Legal 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:  
Effective Council – Engaging, responsive and resilient Council.

6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within a 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:** The Southern Internal Audit Partnership deliver the council's internal audit function.

## 7 Background papers

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

### **Previous reports:**

- Annual Governance Statement 2021-22, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Online available: [Epsom and Ewell Democracy \(epsom-ewell.gov.uk\)](https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk) [Last accessed: 02/06/2023]

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### **Other papers:**

- Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion 2022-2023, which is on the agenda for this committee meeting: [Epsom and Ewell Democracy \(epsom-ewell.gov.uk\)](https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk).