

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024-2025

Head of Service:	Andrew Bircher, Assistant Director of Corporate Services
Report Author:	Will Mace, Corporate Governance and Strategy Manager
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025

Summary

The Annual Governance Statement ("Statement") is an important document which provides assurance concerning the council's governance arrangements, both financial and non-financial. It is prepared on an annual basis for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.

The Statement was taken to Audit and Scrutiny Committee for approval in July 2025, as per its terms of reference. The Statement has been brought to Full Council to ensure all Members are conversant with its contents. Please note the information within the Statement is accurate as of 1 July 2025 (as per its production timeline).

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Note the Annual Governance Statement 2024-2025 as set out at Appendix 1.**

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, that is the set of processes, standards and structures that underpin the effective running of the council. This is referred to as the Annual Governance Statement ("Statement"), and forms part of the annual financial statements.

2 Background

- 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 Statement 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 Statement is attached at Appendix 1, with feedback from Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee included.
- 2.4 The Statement was prepared with reference to the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, and 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 Statement, 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 No direct implications.
- 3.2 Crime & Disorder
 - 3.2.1 No direct implications.
- 3.3 Safeguarding
 - 3.3.1 No direct implications.
- 3.4 Dependencies
 - 3.4.1 Not applicable for this report.
- 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 Statement's action plan.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** There are no financial implications arising through the preparation and publication of the Statement.

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 (Statement). Regulation 10 of the 2015 regulations requires the council to publish the Statement alongside the adopted statement of accounts.
- 5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the content of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Not applicable.
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** No direct implications.
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** No direct implications.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** No direct implications.
- 6.6 **Local Government Reorganisation Implications:** No direct implications.

7 Background papers

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

Previous reports:

- *Annual Governance Statement 2023–2024*, Council, 10th December 2024. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MIId=1625> [last accessed 21/11/2025].

Other papers:

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- *Annual Governance Statement 2024–2025*, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, 17th July 2025. Online available: <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=157&MId=1796> [last accessed 21/11/2025].