
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2014/2015

To: **Governance and Audit Committee – September 2015**

By: **Monitoring Officer**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All Wards, this is a corporate document.**

Summary: To provide Governance and Audit Committee with the Annual Governance Statement 2014/15 for approval.

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (amended 2006) introduced the requirement for a Statement on Internal Control (SIC) to be prepared by local government bodies from the financial year 2003/2004. From 2007/2008 this process changed and the council was required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which must be included within the Financial Statement and should be signed by the Leader and Chief Executive.

2.0 The Current Situation

2.1 The Annual Governance Statement, which is attached at Annex 1, should reflect the corporate governance environment of the council as detailed in the adopted Local Code of Corporate Governance. In essence, the AGS is the formal statement that recognises, records and publishes the council's governance arrangements.

2.2 The AGS is a key corporate document, and the Leader and Chief Executive have joint responsibility as signatories for its accuracy and completeness. In order to ensure that the AGS accurately reflects our Governance Framework, a number of sources of assurance were gathered to feed into the preparation of the document. Following the approval process it will be formally signed as required.

2.3 The Draft AGS came before the Governance and Audit Committee earlier this month, and was agreed with minor changes. This was then provided to our External Auditors Grant Thornton for them to audit.

2.4 An action plan for the 'significant governance issues' identified has been prepared which is attached at Annex 2. Following approval of the AGS this action plan will be entered into the performance management system and reported back to this Committee on a regular basis.

3.0 External Audit

- 3.1 Grant Thornton had an opportunity to audit the Draft AGS and their findings were reported to the Monitoring Officer. They have no issues with it or amendments.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 That Members approve the Annual Governance Statement 2014/2015 and associated action plan.
- 4.2 That Members do not approve the Annual Governance Statement 2014/2015. This is not recommended as the AGS reinforces the council's governance arrangements.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.2 Legal

- 5.2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations and other accounting guidance requires the council to follow prescribed formats in the completion of the Annual Governance Statement.

5.3 Corporate

- 5.3.1 The Annual Governance Statement is a corporate document and as such should be owned by all senior officers and members of the authority.

5.4 Equity and Equalities

- 5.4.1 There are no equity or equalities issues arising from this report.

5.5 Risks

- 5.5.1 Failure to approve the AGS will diminish the council's governance arrangements.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 That Members approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2014/2015 and associated action plan.

7.0 Decision Making Process

- 7.1 This recommendation does not involve the making of a key decision.
- 7.2 This recommendation is within the Council's Budgetary and Policy Framework and the decision may be taken by the Governance and Audit Committee.

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Reporting to:	<i>Madeline Homer, Chief Executive</i>

Annex List

Annex 1	Annual Governance Statement 2014/15
Annex 2	AGS Significant Issue Action Plan 2014-15

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Nicola Walker, Head of Financial Services
Legal	Tim Howes, Head of Legal and Democratic Support & Monitoring Officer