

Name of meeting: Corporate Governance & Audit Committee
Date: 24 November 2020

Title of report: Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

Purpose of report: To request the Committee approve the Statement ahead of it being signed off by the Chief Executive & the Leader and published with the Annual Accounts.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by Director & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Yes
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal, Governance & Commissioning?	Yes
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Shabir Pandor

Electoral wards affected: All
Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable
Have you considered GDPR; Yes
Public

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to approve the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement prior to it being signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The Statement covers 2019/20 and up to the date at which the Annual Statement of Accounts is approved (later on the agenda of this meeting of the Committee).
- 1.2 The Statement concludes that overall the governance arrangements remain fit for purpose and Members are asked to confirm that the issues raised reflect the state of the governance and control framework during 2019/20 to date.
- 1.3 The Statement is a statutory requirement and accompanies the Statement of Accounts in order to provide readers with assurance about the governance and internal control environment in which they have been compiled and to which they relate.
- 1.4 The draft Statement was noted at the July meeting of this Committee and remains largely unchanged, as Executive Team are of the view that it is still too

soon to determine the full impact and consequences of the coronavirus pandemic on the Council and its key objectives.

- 1.5 The Statement has been compiled following the annual review of the effectiveness of the overall internal control and governance arrangements and draws on a number of forms of assurance which have been presented to various parts of the Council during the year, including many to this Committee (e.g. annual activity reports), being principally the Annual Report of Internal Audit, reports by the external auditor, Monitoring Officer and from the performance management framework.
- 1.6 The Statement highlights a number of what are termed 'Significant Governance Issues'. Some are brought forward from the 2018/19 Statement, in the main reflecting the wide-ranging nature of the issues and action required. A number of new issues have been identified too. Half of the Issues identified in the 2018/19 Statement have been addressed entirely or sufficiently so as not to merit inclusion again.
- 1.7 The actions and controls the Council is taking are contained within an Action Plan that underpins the Statement. It is intended that the Action Plan will be the subject of internal monitoring, with reporting back to Executive Team and this Committee covering quarters 3 and 4 for 2020/21.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 The detail is contained within the 2019/20 Statement.

3. Implications for the Council

- 3.1 **Working with People** – None directly
- 3.2 **Working with Partners** – None directly
- 3.3 **Place Based Working** – None directly
- 3.4 **Improving outcomes for children**– None directly
- 3.5 **Climate change and air quality**- None directly
- 3.6 **Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)** - Although each of the sub categorisations above suggest no direct implications, the review of the effectiveness of the internal control and governance arrangements covers all aspects of the Council's operations, including elements of the above, either specifically, indirectly or on a commissioned basis.

4. Consultees and their opinions

- 4.1 The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Service Director Legal, Governance & Commissioning, Service Director Finance, Head of (Audit &) Risk have commented on the draft Statement.

5. Next steps & Timelines

- 5.1 A finalised version of the 2019/20 Statement will be signed off by the Chief Executive and the Leader and published with the Annual Accounts.

5.2 Action Plan progress will be monitored for the remainder of the year and reported to Executive Team and this Committee and then inform compilation of the 2020/21 Draft Statement.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Members are asked to approve the 2019/20 Statement.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation

Not applicable.

8. Contact officer

Simon Straker, Audit Manager 01484 221000 (73726)

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The 2019/20 Statement is attached.
2018/19 Statement
Quarterly reports on the 2018/19 Action Plan

10. Service Director responsible

Chief Executive.