



Name of meeting: Corporate Governance & Audit Committee
Date: 10 February 2023

Title of report: Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

Purpose of report: To seek approval from the Committee to finalise the draft version of the Statement noted at the 30 September 2022 meeting to accompany 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 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement, which concludes that overall the governance arrangements remain fit for purpose and to consider whether the issues raised reflect the state of the governance and control framework during 2021/22 and to date.
- 1.2 The Statement covers the period up until the Annual Accounts 2021/22 are approved, which is the next item on the agenda, so in effect 10th February 2023. Since last September, the Council's financial position has come under sharp focus, and the Service Director of Finance has revised the draft to reflect this significant change of circumstance.
- 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 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.

- 1.5 The Statement highlights a number of what are termed 'Significant Governance Issues'. Several of the Issues from the 2020/21 Statement are brought forward in one guise or another, reflecting the wide-ranging nature of the issues and action required. Consideration has been given to a number of potential new Issues and one, the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis has been incorporated, coupled with the serious financial position of the Council.
- 1.6 The actions and controls the Council is taking are contained within a recommended Action Plan and since the final Statement would not be agreed until later in the year, the draft Action Plan has been the subject of internal monitoring, ultimately reporting back to Executive Team and this Committee during the remainder of 2022/23.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 The detail was contained within the draft 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, Service Director Strategy & Innovation, Head of (Audit &) Risk have commented on the Statement.

5. Next steps & Timelines

- 5.1 The Statement will be incorporated into the published Annual Accounts and progress with implementing the Action Plan will be monitored and reported accordingly.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Members are asked to approve the final 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 2021/22 Statement is attached.

Draft 2021/22 Statement

2020/21 Statement

Action Plan 2021/22 (included in the Quarterly Reports of Internal Audit).

10. Service Director responsible

Chief Executive.