



Name of meeting: Corporate Governance & Audit Committee

Date: 29 September 2023

Title of report: Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Purpose of report: To seek approval from the Committee to finalise the draft version of the Statement noted at the 14 July 2023 meeting to accompany the Annual Accounts once approved.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k 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 Catherine Scott

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 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement, which concludes that overall, the governance arrangements remain fit for purpose and in doing so, consider whether the issues raised reflect the state of the governance and control framework during 2022/23 and to date.
- 1.2 The Statement covers the period up until the Annual Accounts 2022/23 are approved. In order to avoid potential timing issues in the compilation of the 2023/24 Draft Statement and to provide a clearer focus with which to monitor management of the Significant Governance Issues identified in the 2022/23 Statement, it is recommended that this be approved and finalised at this meeting. Should the Statement require further revision and update before the Accounts are approved, it is recommended that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to do so.
- 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 2021/22 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 with the serious financial position of the Council predominating.
- 1.6 The actions and controls the Council is taking are contained within a recommended Action Plan and progress so far is reported later on the agenda, and this will continue via the Executive Team and this Committee during the remainder of 2023/24.

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, Interim Service Director of Finance, Service Director Strategy & Innovation, Head of (Audit &) Risk have commented on the Statement. The Leader has also received the Statement.

5. Next steps & Timelines

- 5.1 The Statement will be incorporated into the published Annual Accounts once approved 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, and delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any minor amendments, for example, as requested by the external auditor.

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 2022/23 Statement is attached.

Draft 2022/23 Statement

2021/22 Statement (as updated in September 2023, under delegated authority granted at its' approval in February 2023, at the suggestion of the external auditor)

Action Plan 2022/23.

10. Service Director responsible

Chief Executive.