

Report for: Corporate Committee – 18 March 2020

Title: Follow Up - Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

Report

authorised by : Assistant Director of Corporate Governance

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Information

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 To inform the Corporate Committee of the progress to address the significant issues raised in the 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement, which is a statutory requirement and was approved by the Committee in July 2019 and published as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1 Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Corporate Committee notes the contents of this follow up.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Background information

6.1 The Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for publication with the Council's annual accounts. The AGS comments on the Council's governance framework as a whole. Corporate governance brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.

6.2 The preparation of an AGS is a statutory requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These regulations require local authorities to produce an annual statement, in accordance with 'proper practice'.

6.3 The AGS is approved at Corporate Board before being presented to the Corporate Committee for approval. The Chief Executive and Leader sign off the statement and the agreed 'significant governance issues' for the period, which includes an action plan identifying responsible officers and deadlines for action.

6.4 The mechanisms within the Council that ensure governance arrangements continue to operate as intended are on-going throughout the year, this activity helps to build the next AGS. The Head of Internal Audit periodically seeks specific assurances that planned actions have taken place.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1 Corporate governance is an important element of the external assessment processes. The annual accounts, including the AGS, are subject to audit by the council's external auditors. While the whole of the financial statements may not be qualified, an incorrect or inaccurate AGS may be raised as a recommendation by the external auditors. Ensuring the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, which cover all Priority areas, will assist in improving services to residents and other stakeholders.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

8.1 Finance and Procurement

There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

8.2 Legal

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and advises that there are no direct legal implications arising out of the follow up steps taken.

8.3 Equality

There are no direct equality implications for the Council's existing policies, priorities and strategies as a result of this report. However, ensuring that the Council has effective governance arrangements in place and taking appropriate action to improve these where required will assist the Council to use its available resources more effectively.

This report deals with governance arrangements and their implementation across all areas of the Council, which have an impact on various parts of the community. Improvements in managing governance will therefore improve services the Council provides to all sections of the community.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 – action plan

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.