

Report for: Audit Committee - 14 December 2023

Item number: 13

Title: Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 Follow Up Report

Report authorised by: Jon Warlow – Director of Finance

Lead Officer: Minesh Jani – Head of Audit & Risk Management
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Ward(s) affected: N/a

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** N/a

1. Describe the issue under consideration

To update the Committee and provide assurance on the progress to address the significant governance issues identified within the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not Applicable.

3. Recommendations

The Audit Committee is recommended to note the progress reported.

4. Reasons for decision

The Audit Committee's terms of reference include a review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework, and consider the local code of governance as well as –

- To review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion.
- To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

The Audit Committee is responsible for approving the Draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

5. Alternative options considered

Not Applicable.

6. Background information

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 underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.

Prior to its final approval, the Council needs to demonstrate that the AGS has been reviewed and agreed by relevant senior managers across the authority and an appropriate member body. The AGS was therefore presented to the Audit Committee in July 2023. At this meeting Members requested a follow up / progress report during the year to ensure they had visibility of the actions being taken to address the significant governance issues highlighted. The Audit Committee also chose to invite Senior Management owners of three of the issues to provide wider assurances to them in person with regards action plans for those risk areas.

The information in this report has been compiled from information provided by the action owners, other reports and follow up activity by Mazars and the In-house team in Audit & Risk Management.

The Head of Audit & Risk Management has reported to Corporate Leadership Team in year re the actions taken and is satisfied with the progress noted regarding all actions at the time of the follow up. The action plan will continue to be tracked as part of the preparations for producing the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement, the work on this commenced in October 2023.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes'?

The work to strengthen the governance framework in the council makes a contribution to all strategic priority outcomes, as good governance is central to effective organisational health.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

There are no carbon or climate change considerations arising directly from this report.

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Procurement

There are no direct contract and procurement implications arising from this report.

Head of Legal & Governance – Benita Edwards – Head of Legal Services

The Head of Legal & Governance was consulted in the preparation of the AGS and confirmed previously that it had been produced in accordance with current and best practice guidelines. The draft AGS was approved by Audit Committee in July 2023, as such there are no further legal comments arising from this follow up report.

Equality

There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 Follow Up Table

11. Background papers

Agenda Item 8 Audit Committee July 2023 -

https://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s140703/Final%20AGS_200723_cover%20note.pdf