



Governance Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 30 July 2020

Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

Report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council is required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This is published alongside the Council's Statement of Accounts. The Governance Scrutiny Group, by reviewing this Statement, scrutinises the Council's governance arrangements.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Governance Scrutiny Group review and approve the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement (**Appendix A**).

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To conform with best practice with regards to corporate governance and comply with relevant legislation.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Council is required to publish an Annual Governance Statement (see Appendix A) alongside the Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 4.2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) have jointly issued a framework and guidance in relation to the AGS, 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016 Edition)'. The guidance urges local authorities to prepare a governance statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they have monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period.
- 4.3. It also recommends that when complying with the guidance, authorities should use it in a way that best reflects their structure, type, functions and size. The AGS is attached at Appendix A and is prepared following the completion of 'Governance Assurance Questionnaires' by senior officers of the Council. The Leader and the Chief Executive are required to sign the AGS and this will accompany the Council's Statement of Accounts.

- 4.4. The AGS reflects the requirements of the updated CIPFA/SOLACE “Delivering good governance in local government framework (2016)”. This incorporates the seven principles within the Local Code and are referenced in the relevant sections of the AGS. Other content surrounding, for example Section 4 ‘Significant Governance Issues’, will inevitably alter as new risks and opportunities arise and the environment we operate in alters over time.
- 4.5. This year, there are significant governance issues linked to the risks surrounding Covid-19 (Section 4 Appendix A), along with corresponding actions. It is likely the AGS will change when the Financial Statements are presented to the Governance Scrutiny Group in November as the legacy of Covid-19 develops.
- 4.6. The final AGS will be reported with the Statement of Accounts which will be approved at the Governance Scrutiny Group (24 November 2020).

5. Risk and Uncertainties

- 5.1. The process of preparing and reviewing the AGS adds value to the corporate governance and internal control framework of the Council.

6. Implications

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

The report complies with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no Section 17 implications associated with this report.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

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| Quality of Life | Effective Governance enables the Council to achieve its Corporate Objectives |
| Efficient Services | |
| Sustainable Growth | |
| The Environment | |

8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Governance Scrutiny Group review and approve the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement (**Appendix A**).

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| Background papers available for Inspection: | Mazars – Annual Report 2019/20 |
| List of appendices: | Appendix A: Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 |

