

Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee

19 July 2021

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Electoral division(s): Not applicable.

Summary

The report advises of the requirements for the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19. It includes a draft Statement for approval at Appendix a.

Recommendation

- (1) That the draft Statement be supported subject to any observations from the Committee.
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Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require the publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This statement has been produced in line with guidance issued in 2016 by CIPFA / SOLACE on best practice for developing and maintaining a locally adopted Code of Governance. A Corporate Code of Governance was approved by the Governance Committee at a meeting on 12 September 2016.
- 1.2 Corporate Governance is the process by which the County Council ensures and gives assurance that it is doing the right things, in the right way, in a timely and accountable manner. It comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the County Council operates and through which it accounts to its communities.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The draft AGS for the County Council for 2020/21 outlines:
 - the scope of governance responsibilities
 - the purpose of the governance framework
 - a description of the governance framework
 - arrangements for review of the effectiveness of the governance framework
 - Governance issues that need to be addressed.

- 2.2 Information is gathered from a number of sources, internal and external. The draft Statement was discussed with senior officers and internal auditors. It is now presented to this Committee for consideration as a draft, prior to the final draft being submitted to the Committee for approval in September 2021 alongside the approval of accounts. The later timescale is due to the effects of the public health emergency.
- 2.3 Updates on the main Governance issues identified in last year's Action Plan are included in each section of the draft Statement, including progress on improving corporate governance following the critical inspections that took place in 2019/20.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 Not applicable.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The external auditor will be consulted on the draft Annual Governance Statement so that the auditor's comments can be taken into account prior to the submission of the final draft to the Committee in September 2021.

5 Finance

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
There are risks from services failing to deliver the action plan	Individual directorates, the Executive Leadership Team and this Committee, monitor these risks.
There are reputational risks from a failure to adopt a comprehensive AGS and action plan	This plan is ready for approval and has the commitment of the senior leadership team who will be responsible collectively for its implementation.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 The Statement is aligned with the Code of Corporate Governance.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

Background papers

None.