

DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023-24

Report of the Interim Section 151 Officer

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The attached document is the draft version of the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2023/24. This was circulated to all Corporate Leadership Team members on 15th May 2024 for approval by 24th May 2024. Provided there has been no material change in governance issues, this will be issued as final alongside the statutory Annual Financial Accounts, later in the financial year.

1.2 The report has been prepared in line with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Finance Advisory Network and the changes highlighted in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

1.3 The Council's corporate governance arrangements are summarised in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance. Levels of compliance with the Code are reviewed each year by the Head of Internal Audit to enable the Authority to measure its arrangements against the Local Code and identify areas where improvements are necessary as detailed in the Annual Governance Statement. This approach clearly demonstrates the current Authority position and proposed further remedial action to attain full compliance with the Local Code.

1.4 Combined with other formal assurances it also satisfies the legislative requirements (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (6)) to "...consider the findings of the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control".

1.5 Subsequent to approval by the Audit Committee, the Annual Governance Statement needs to be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

1.6 This statement continues to outline the significant issues facing the Authority which need to be effectively managed and highlights areas where protocols are being developed to improve compliance with the Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance. The document is intended to demonstrate the Authority's commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards and levels of corporate governance.

1.7 The AGS includes an Action Plan on the key governance challenges the Council faces in the current year. This includes three of the key items that were also flagged as issues last year (Transformation, Finance/ MTFP and Integrated Care System and now includes a fourth issue around arms length and subsidiary companies).

2. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Audit Committee is asked to approve the Annual Governance Statement prior to signing by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

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