

Audit and Governance Committee

Date: 30th November 2022

Agenda No:

Title of Report:	Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2021/22
Purpose of Report:	<p>The Council is required, as part of its annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021/22. This is a statutory document that describes the arrangements the Council has in place to ensure good governance.</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement is signed by the Leader, Chief Executive and the S151 Officer and must accompany the Annual Statement of Accounts.</p>
Recommendations:	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ reviews and approves the Annual Governance Statement and the actions planned by the Council to further enhance good governance arrangements; and➤ agrees that an update on actions taken to address the governance issues identified will be provided to the January 2023 meeting of this committee.
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Context	<p>There is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>Under the Council's Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Audit and Governance Committee to approve this statement.</p>

To support the production of effective Annual Governance Statements, in April 2016, CIPFA and SOLACE published guidance, *'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016'*, which has applied to annual governance statements prepared since the 2018/2019 financial year.

Guidance notes were also published to assist Council Leaders and Chief Executives in reviewing and testing their governance arrangements against the revised seven principles for good governance.

In order to review the effectiveness of the Council's Governance Framework, this AGS has been produced in consultation with Heads of Service and Directors across all areas of the Council.

This included:

- reviewing the existing governance arrangements against the principles set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework;
- reviewing the issues identified in last year's AGS and the actions taken to address them
- reviewing any audit reports or other governance issues that have arisen since the previous statement was produced
- assessing each area of the Council's maturity in managing risk
- summarising the key themes and issues that emerged in this document.

The AGS includes (on pages 20-30) a summary of the key Governance issues that have emerged and the actions that are being taken to address them.

These include 6 priorities carried forward from the previous year as ongoing:

- Ofsted Improvement Plan
- GFRS Improvement Plan
- Recruitment and retention of employees in 'hard to fill', critical posts
- The impact of COVID-19 on governance
- ICT transformation roadmap

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Procurement transformation <p>It also includes 3 new priorities identified as a result of this review process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adults Social Care transformation and performance- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion development- Implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy
Key Risks	Failure to deliver effective governance will impact on the ability of the Council to achieve its vision, outcomes and priorities.