

Review of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 26 September 2023

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

To present to the Committee an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance for consideration and approval.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

Recommendation to Committee:

That:

a) Approve the **Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023/24** (Appendix A)

Reason for recommendation:

The Council has had a Code of Governance ('The Code') in place since 2021. The Code sets out and describes the Council's commitment to corporate governance, and identifies the arrangements that have been made, and will continue to be made to ensure its effective implementation and application in all aspects of the Council's work.

The Code is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it reflects the current governance arrangements of the Council. The Code forms the basis against which the Annual Governance Statement is produced.

This Committee is responsible for reviewing the Code.

Introduction and background

- 1 In the interests of good governance and compliance with law and regulation, the Council has in place a Local Code of Corporate Governance (**'the Code'**). This reflects the main components set out in the CIPFA and SOLACE guidance *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework*. The Code is a public statement of the arrangements the Council has in place to ensure it conducts its business in a way that upholds the highest standards.
- 2 The Code is therefore an important part of the Council's public accountability. It is important it remains fit for purpose, as each year the Council conducts a review of compliance with the Code. The results of this feed into the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control, thereby contributing to the Annual Governance Statement.
- 3 The Code was refreshed for the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement to ensure it set out the Council's objectives and reflected the controls in place. It has been reviewed for the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement and reference has been made to a number of key policies and protocols.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Adequate and effective systems of corporate governance is a central component in the process intended to help ensure that the Council operates efficiently, cost effectively and with integrity. Such arrangement will support the processes of audit and its governance arrangements.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

A Code of Corporate Governance is recommended by the guidance designated as proper practice by CIPFA/SOLACE framework, entitled *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. The Council's Code forms part of the governance framework which defines the principles that underpin governance at the Council.

Equality

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The public-sector equality duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in its decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

The Code does not impact directly on this duty but requires that any activity carried out under the Code complies with the relevant equality policies.

Climate change

There are no climate change implications arising directly from the proposed policy.

Appendices

Appendix A - Local Code of Corporate Governance

Background papers

None.

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