

Annual Governance Statement 2020 - 2021

Audit & Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Report of: Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

- The purpose of this report is for the Committee to receive and approve the proposed final Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021 ('AGS') for signature by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. Once approved the AGS will accompany the Statement of Accounts and be published on the Council's website.
- A draft of the Statement was brought to this Committee on the 30th September. It was noted that a list of questions had recently been sent to the Head of Legal Services to answer in respect of the Statement and that a response to these would be presented in the form of a revised Statement to this Committee.
- In consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, minor amendments have been made to the AGS since the last meeting. In addition, the Statement's action plan has been prioritised, and action owners and completion dates added. In advance of this Committee, Members have been sent a tracked changed version of the original statement to make clear of any changes made.

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

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Recommendation to Committee:

That the Committee approve the updated annual governance statement set out in Appendix A.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duty to adopt an annual governance statement. In addition, to enable officers to focus on the preparation of next year's statement.

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the AGS should be approved by Members of the Council meeting, or by a Committee, at the same time as the Statement of Accounts is approved.
- 1.2. This Committee has delegated authority to approve the Council's AGS each year. It is then submitted to the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to sign.
- 1.3. A draft of the 2020-2021 Statement was brought to this Committee on the 30th September. It was noted that a list of questions had been sent to the Head of Legal Services on the day of the Committee meeting to answer in respect of the Statement, and that a response to these would be given in the form of a revised Statement at the next Committee meeting.
- 1.4. A small number of changes have been made to that draft document in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee. For example, prioritising the actions in the Statement's action plan and adding action owners and completion dates. Only high priority actions have been included in the action plan.
- 1.5. No additional items have been included as significant governance issues in updating the AGS from draft to proposed final, following the discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair. Also, no further comments have been received from the Internal and External Auditors.
- 1.6. Members of the Committee have been sent a tracked changed version of the original statement to make clear the changes made.
- 1.7. The updated Statement is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.8. The previous version of the Statement, brought to this Committee in September, can also be found online.¹ The September report also includes further background on the Statement.
- 1.9. Once approved and signed, the AGS will be published on the Council's website, along with the Statement of Accounts, for members of the public,

¹ See, *Annual Governance Statement 2020/21*, Audit & Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 30 September 2021. Online available: <https://tandridge.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4401/Annual%20Governance%20Statement%202020%21.pdf> [Last accessed 12/10/2021].

Members, Officers and other stakeholders to view. Further progress reports on items recognised in the Annual Governance Statement will be provided to this Committee as part of its work programme.

2. Other options considered

2.1. The drafting and publication of the Statement is a statutory requirement.

3. Key implications

3.1. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Finance Officer is completely supportive of the Annual Governance Statement as identified in the attached. There are no direct financial implications.

3.2. Comments of the Head of Legal Services

Completion and approval of the AGS is required by Regulation 6(1) (b) of the Accounts and Audit England Regulations 2015. Within the Regulations, and in accordance with defined 'proper practice', there is a mandatory requirement to publish an AGS. The AGS, attached at Appendix A, if approved and signed will form part of the Statement of Accounts. Failure to comply would result in the Council not meeting its statutory requirements.

3.3. Equality

The draft Annual Governance Statement references the Council's key HR policies and procedures relevant to equalities and diversity.

3.4. Climate change

There are no direct climate change implications arising from the Annual Governance Statement.

4. Appendices

Appendix 'A' - Annual Governance Statement

5. Background papers

None. However, the previous version of the 2020-2021 Statement has been cited in Section 1.6, footnote 1.

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