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# Annual Governance Statement

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Governance and Ethics Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	24.08.2020
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Jo Stewart
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	30 July 2020
<b>Report Author:</b>	Joseph Holmes
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	GE3823

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the Council for 2019-20.
- 1.2 This report outlines issues that Corporate Board considered should be included in the 2019-20 AGS as requiring action to resolve.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Annual Governance Statement sets out actions to mitigate risks to the Council's governance arrangements, these should be considered and approved by the committee.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Financial:</b>	None directly
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None directly
<b>Legal:</b>	This report is a requirement that it must be considered by the Governance & Ethics Committee

<b>Risk Management:</b>	See the main report detailing the action plan to mitigate overall risks raised in the AGS			
<b>Property:</b>	None directly			
<b>Policy:</b>	None directly			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>		X		
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>				None
<b>Health Impact:</b>				None
<b>ICT Impact:</b>				None
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>				None
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>		X		The AGS supports the Council Strategy through focussing on areas to help improve its delivery

## Annual Governance Statement

<b>Core Business:</b>		X		The AGS focusses on areas that can improve core business
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		None
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	This report has been considered by Corporate Board and the portfolio holder.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is a core document that sets out the Council's governance arrangements and a review of their effectiveness. The AGS must be reviewed and approved by the Governance & Ethics Committee annually and is published with the financial statements.
- 4.2 The review for 2019-20 has highlighted four key areas to include in the AGS with an accompanying action plan. There has been an impact due to Covid-19, though this has been much less pronounced for the previous financial year, than the current one.
- 4.3 The four key areas below have been highlighted due to a review of internal and external pieces of evidence as the key areas to improve upon in respect of governance this year:
- Delivering effective engagement
  - Capacity to deliver projects
  - Improving Asset Management
  - Commercial investment

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 This report outlines the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and explains how the necessary assurance to support the AGS has been obtained. This should enable the Committee to make an informed judgement as to the effectiveness of the process that the Council has followed in conducting the annual review of the system of internal control within the Council.

### Background

- 5.2 The AGS is designed to provide stakeholders of the Council with assurance that the Council has operated within the law and that the Council has met the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations:

“The Council shall conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control”.

## Annual Governance Statement

- 5.3 A copy of the AGS for 2019-20 is attached to this report, for review, at Appendix B.
- 5.4 The Council relies on a number of sources of information to carry out the review of the system of internal control and effectiveness. These include:
- Service risk registers
  - The Audit Manager's annual report
  - Reports from external regulators, e.g. OFSTED, Grant Thornton (the Council's External Auditor), the LGA (peer review process).
- 5.5 This evidence provides the assurance that enables the Leader and Chief Executive to sign the AGS with confidence.
- 5.6 The Chief Executive reviewed the governance arrangements in 2019/20 to ensure that these align with the new Council Strategy.
- 5.7 A key element of the review of the system of internal control is the identification of any weaknesses or risks in the system, along with recommendations to mitigate such issues. Then in the subsequent year further report is made on progress with implementing agreed recommendations.
- 5.8 The Annual Governance Statement for 2018-19 outlined the following issues of concern:
- The Council's significant investment in commercial property, transformation programme and pursuing commercialisation opportunities will continue to require effective governance arrangements around any proposed changes.
  - Financial management arrangements in demand led social care areas need to be strengthened to mitigate the chances of unplanned budget overspends occurring.
  - Overview and governance of school funding needs to be strengthened particularly in light of a significant overspend within the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant Block.
- 5.9 The first item has been carried forward to 2020-21. Given the impact of Covid-19 on the economic position of the country, this remains a risk and focus for the year ahead as commercialisation will have a different risk and a change in the Council's ability to enter different commercial environments. The Government is also currently consulting on changes to Council's ability to borrow for commercial only activities.
- 5.10 The financial management items have been addressed during the financial year. Additional focus has been placed on ASC monitoring and modelling; the underlying financial position in ASC has improved as highlighted by an underspend during 2019-20. Focus has also been placed on the DSG and additional reporting has taken place through to the School's Forum.

## Covid-19 and impact on the AGS

- 5.11 This report is focussed on 2019-20. At this point, the Covid-19 outbreak had only just begun. There has been a significant impact on the Council as a result of this and for

2020-21 there will be a number of enhancements to the Council's governance as a result of the learning from the Covid-19 outbreak. At the time of writing (July 2020), the Council has started to implement a recovery strategy whilst also completing a number of actions through the response to the Covid-19 outbreak. For the 2019-20 AGS, the impact of Covid-19 has not had a significant impact on the key issues that have arisen in respect of the outbreak, though this has enhanced some of the focus on the areas, especially engagement.

### Proposals

5.12 In light of the issues raised during the year and after a review of effectiveness, the following four areas are the focus for 2020/21:

- **Delivering effective engagement** - Ensuring effective engagement with stakeholders through which to hear the voice of the resident more. **Core recommendation from the LGA peer review**
- **Capacity to deliver projects** - ensuring that the Council has sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to deliver its programme of projects while maintaining frontline services to residents and businesses. **Core to delivering the Council Strategy**
- **Improving Asset Management** - ensuring that the Council maintains a comprehensive, asset register, that supports its decision making process for the enhancement, disposal and maintenance of assets. **Recommendation from Internal Audit and links to internal audit review**
- **Commercial investment** – The Council's significant investment in commercial property, transformation programme and pursuing commercialisation opportunities will continue to require effective governance arrangements around any proposed changes. **Brought forward from 20-21**

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 None. The production of the AGS is a requirement to be completed annually.

## 7 Conclusion

7.1 A key function of the Governance and Ethics Committee is to review and approve the AGS for 2019-20 prior to it being signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and review the conclusion reached.

7.2 In order to be able to review the AGS the Committee needs to examine the evidence, noted in 5.4, above, that supports the AGS. This evidence is presented in separate reports.

## 8 Appendices

Appendix A – Annual Governance Statement

Appendix B – Action plan

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**Background Papers:**

2018-19 Annual Governance Statement

LGA Peer review – November 2019

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes:  No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** all

**Officer details:**

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**Change History**

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2			

## Appendix A – Annual Governance Statement

### 1. Scope of Responsibility

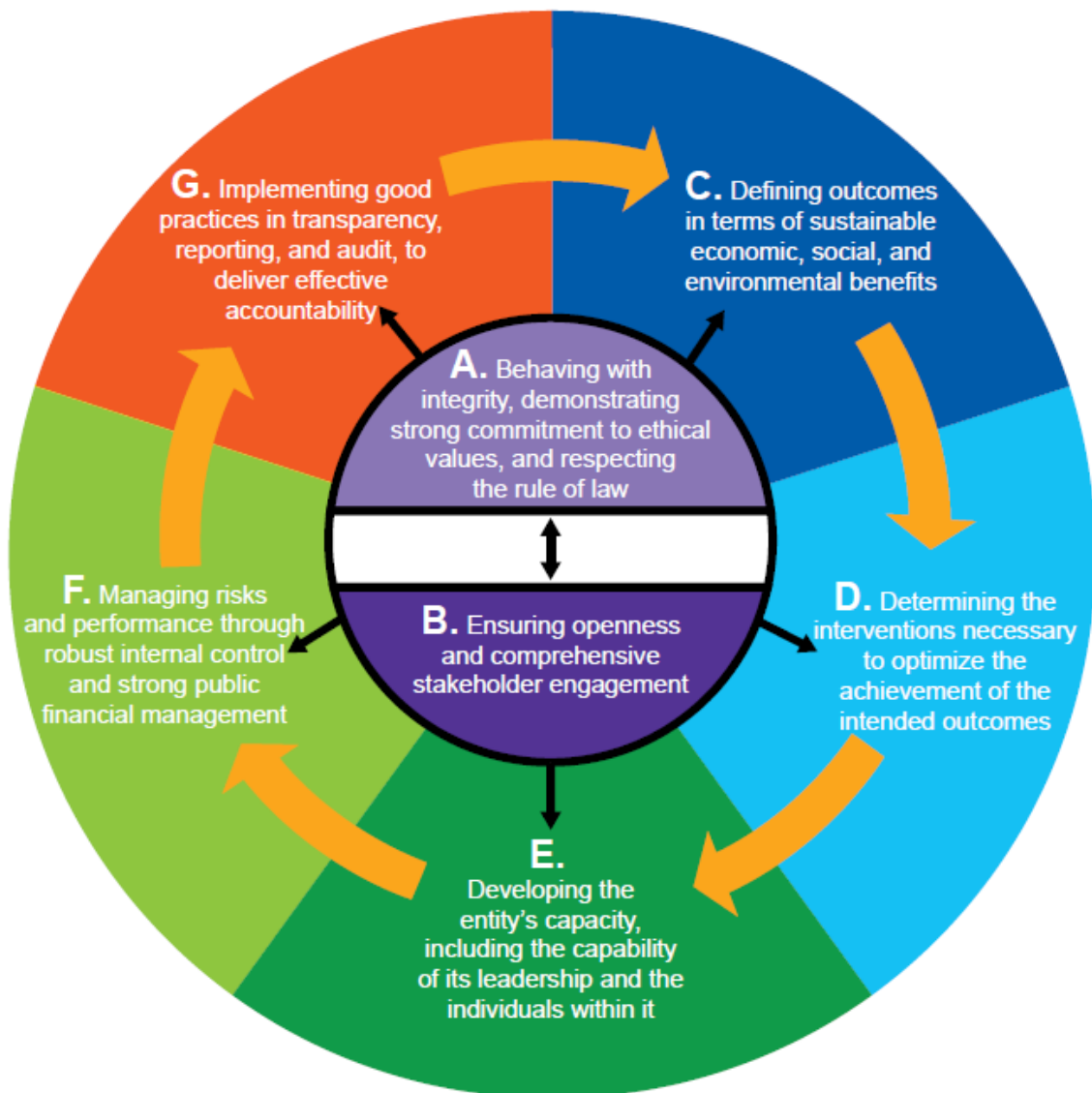
- 1.1 West Berkshire Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. West Berkshire Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, West Berkshire Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 This Statement explains how West Berkshire Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the review of its system of internal control in accordance with best practice, and that the review be reported in an Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.4 The Council has currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its Constitution to improve its governance and decision making. The Council is also delivering an action plan following a corporate peer challenge led by the Local Government Association November 2019.

### 2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 2.1 The purpose of the governance framework is to ensure that the authority directs and controls its activities in a way that meets standards of good governance and is accountable to the community. It does this by putting in place an organisational culture and values which drive a responsible approach to the management of public resources, supported by appropriate systems and processes, and ensuring that these work effectively. It works with the Council's Performance Management Framework to ensure that the Council has in place strategic objectives reflecting the needs of the community and is monitoring the achievement of these objectives through delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of West Berkshire Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework has been in place at West Berkshire Council for the year ended 31 March 2020 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

### 3. The Principles of Good Governance

3.1 The CIPFA/SOLACE framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government sets out seven core principles of good governance, these are:



### 4. Methodology for preparing the Annual Governance Statement

4.1 The Annual Governance Statement has been prepared using a process similar to that used in previous years, including;

- Review of the annual Internal Audit report and quarterly internal audit progress reports.
- The work of the Finance and Governance Group reviewing the Constitution on annual basis and referring changes to the Governance and Ethics Committee and Council
- The Audit and Governance Committee approves the Annual Governance Statement at the same time as the final approval of the financial statements and is signed off by the Chief Executive or Section 151 officer and Leader of the Council.
- Review of the Corporate risk Register by the Corporate Board and Governance & Ethics Committee



## Annual Governance Statement

- Responding positively to external regulators such as OFSTED, the Information Commissioner, the Local Government Ombudsman and external auditor Grant Thornton.

### 5. The Governance Framework

5.1 There are a number of key elements to the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements. These elements form our local code of Governance and these are underpinned by the CIPFA / SOLACE framework above and core principles of good governance which are:-

- Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the local community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
- Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
- Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managed risk.
- Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective.
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

5.2 The Council's Constitution explains existing policy making and delegation procedures and the matters which must be dealt with by the full Council. It documents the role and responsibilities of the Executive, portfolio holders, each committee and Members and officers. The Council has approved a protocol governing relationships between Members and Officers as part of its Constitution and has adopted codes of conduct for both Officers and Members which facilitate the promotion, communication and embedding of proper standards of behaviour. Officers have job descriptions and there are clearly defined schemes of delegation, all of which are reviewed from time to time.

5.3 The Council's Constitution incorporates clear guidelines to ensure that business is dealt with in an open manner except in circumstances when issues should be kept confidential. Meetings are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. All Executive /committee agendas, minutes and portfolio holder decisions are published promptly on the Council's website. In addition, senior officers of the Council can make decisions under delegated authority. The over-arching policy of the Council is decided by the full Council.

5.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Governance and Ethics Committee hold Portfolio Holders to account for delivery of the Council's policy framework within the agreed budget, and protocols are in place for any departure from this to be properly examined.

5.5 The Council engages with its communities through a number of channels, including consultation events, surveys and campaigns relating to specific initiatives.

## Annual Governance Statement

- 5.6 The Council Strategy is supplemented by more detailed information on the key projects and programmes of work that the authority will be delivering during the year – with actions to achieve priority outcomes set out in service plans. More detailed service plans are drawn up by teams across the Council, with objectives set for individual members of staff through the annual appraisal process. This process also looks at the development and training needs of staff, with a programme of training then put in place to meet these needs.
- 5.7 Progress against the Council Strategy outcomes and budgets is monitored regularly by the Executive Leadership Board and Portfolio Holders. The Scrutiny Committee receives quarterly reports focusing on delivery of key projects and programmes of work and drawing attention to other areas where progress is exceeding, or falling short of targets. Portfolio Holders also monitor progress in delivery.
- 5.8 The Council has an officer Strategic Leadership Team to monitor financial performance, service performance, the progress of key corporate projects and risk management and to oversee the implementation of recommendations from Internal Audit reports.
- 5.9 The Council publishes an Annual Financial Report (incorporating the Statement of Accounts) annually within the statutory timescales. The Annual Financial Report incorporates the full requirements of best practice guidance in relation to corporate governance, risk management and internal control.
- 5.10 The Council is subject to independent audit by Grant Thornton and receives an Annual Audit Letter reporting on findings. The Council supplements this work with its own internal audit function and ad hoc external peer reviews. The Governance & Ethics Committee undertakes the core functions as identified in CIPFA's *Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities*.
- 5.11 The Council has arrangements for managing risk in its Risk Management Policy.

## 6. Review of effectiveness

- 6.1 The authority has a statutory responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of Heads of Teams who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of a sound governance environment.
- 6.2 Staff awareness training has been undertaken to ensure that the Council complies adequately with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information Acts, and Equality requirements.
- 6.3 The Council has appointed the Executive Director (Resources) as the Section 151 officer with the statutory responsibility for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. CIPFA/SOLACE advises that the S151 officer should report directly to the Chief Executive and be a member of the 'Leadership Team', of equal status to other members. The Executive Director (Resources) is a member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- 6.4 The Council has appointed the Service Director (Strategy & Governance) as the statutory "Monitoring Officer" and has procedures to ensure that the Monitoring Officer is aware of any issues which may have legal implications.

## Annual Governance Statement

- 6.5 All Executive reports are reviewed by the S151 and Monitoring Officer. All reports to Executive are required to demonstrate how the subject matter links to the Council Strategy and highlight resource implications. Officers are also asked to draw out risk, equality, environmental, management and legal issues as appropriate. Similar procedures are in place for the other Council Committees.
- 6.6 The Council has whistle-blowing and anti-fraud and corruption policies. It has a formal complaints procedure and seeks to address and learn from complaints. The Council's Governance & Ethics Committee deals with complaints relating to the conduct of Members.
- 6.7 Members' induction training is undertaken after each election. Members also receive regular updates and training on developments in local government.
- 6.8 Key roles in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness is undertaken by:

**The Council** collectively responsible for the governance of the Council and the full Council is responsible for agreeing the Constitution, policy framework and budget. Manages risk in making operational and governance decisions together with proposing and implementing the policy framework, budget and key strategies.

**The Executive** receives regular monitoring reports on revenue and capital expenditure and performance.

**Governance and Ethics Committee** approves the annual audit plan, monitors the internal control environment through receipt of audit reports and this Statement, and keeps an overview of arrangements for risk management. It also approves this Statement and the Statement of Accounts.

**External Audit** external audit is provided by Grant Thornton. Whilst the external auditors are not required to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's risk and control procedures, their work does give a degree of assurance following the annual audit of the Council's financial accounts.

**Internal Audit** The internal audit team provide the Council with an internal audit service which includes the Council's entire control environment. The Internal Audit Manager takes account of the Council's assurance and monitoring mechanisms, including risk management arrangements, for achieving the Council's objectives.

The Internal Audit Plan is based on the Risk Register and identifies Internal Audit's contribution to the review of the effectiveness of the control environment. The process includes reports to the Governance & Ethics committee on progress of audits. Regular summaries are also produced of the outcome of each audit, together with reviews of whether agreed recommendations have been implemented. Internal Audit provides an annual opinion on the internal control environment and issues that should be included in this Statement.

There is a requirement for internal audit to undertake an annual self-assessment and independent external assessment every five year. Any areas of non-conformance must be reported as part of their annual report and opinion. In the light of feedback we have concluded that internal audit is an effective part of the Council's governance arrangements.

## Annual Governance Statement

Considering all of the arrangements and frameworks, the table below sets out a summary of the review of the Council's effectiveness:

Theme	Comments
<b>Identifying and communicating West Berkshire Council's Strategy that sets out its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users</b>	A new Council Strategy for the period 2019 to 2023 was approved at Council on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2019, following public consultation and engagement.
<b>Measuring the quality of services for users, ensuring they are delivered in accordance with West Berkshire Council's Strategy and ensuring that they represent the best use of resources</b>	Quarterly reports detailing performance against targets, which are linked to the Council Strategy priorities, are considered and reviewed by Executive.
<b>Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation</b>	<p>The Council has a published Consultation Policy, which was last updated in January 2019.</p> <p>The Council also has a Community Panel and consultation exercises are promoted through the usual media channels including the Council's social media accounts. Individual Council Services will send targeted e-mails inviting specific users to respond to specific consultations where it is appropriate to do so.</p> <p>The Local Government Association (LGA) peer review in November 2019 highlighted this a key area to strengthen with the two recommendations below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Jointly design with residents the mechanisms through which to hear their voice more</i></li> <li>• <i>Respond to the desire partners have for the council to lead the setting of a clear direction for West Berkshire into the future and influence the place it should be – raising the ambition, establishing clarity of purpose and sharpening the focus</i></li> </ul>

Theme	Comments
<p><b>Consultation on the budget and proposed budget reductions which affect service users are planned in good time and adhere to the Council’s own consultation policy. The Council will also continue to ensure that the requirements of an Equality Impact Assessment are met and ask our residents how a proposed reduction in service might impact on them or others, and how any impact arising out of the proposal could be mitigated</b></p>	<p>During the financial year 2019-20 the budget consultation for 2020-21 did highlight the need for any specific budget consultation. Previous consultations have been undertaken and are accompanied within consultation policy.</p>
<p><b>Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication</b></p>	<p>The Articles of the Constitution summarises the roles and responsibilities of the Executive, Council, OSMC and other committees, together with the role of a number of statutory officers.</p>
<p><b>Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for members and staff</b></p>	<p>The officers and members codes of conduct, were updated in March and December 2018 respectively, to provide updated guidance on the use of social media.</p> <p>Training on dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints was undertaken by the Governance and Ethics Committee in September 2019.</p> <p>The constitution is currently being reviewed.</p>
<p><b>Reviewing and updating the Constitution including Contracts Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules of Procedure, The Scheme of Delegation, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks</b></p>	<p>A Task Group has been set up review the Constitution. Work is ongoing.</p>
<p><b>Ensuring the authority’s financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on “The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016)”</b></p>	<p>The Council’s financial management arrangements are regularly reviewed by the Finance and Governance Group to ensure compliance with this CIPFA Statement.</p>

Theme	Comments
<p><b>The Governance and Ethics Committee which performs the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA’s “Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities”</b></p>	<p>A review of the effectiveness of the Governance and Ethics Committee was undertaken in 2019. The resulting report was submitted to the Committee in November 2019. The review concluded that the Committee is undertaking most of the responsibilities expected of an audit committee, but not all the key activities recommended in CIPFA’s 2018 guidance update.</p> <p>Internal Audit found that there is scope for improvement in the way the Committee understands and reports on its own activity, for example: refreshing its Terms of Reference; understanding members’ relevant skills and knowledge; undertaking training to improve the Committee’s ability to challenge and assess key assurance reports. The Committee should also be able to assess its own activity and performance, and produce at least an annual report on this.</p>
<p><b>The Finance and Governance Group which helps to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful</b></p>	<p>The Finance and Governance Group meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by the Head of Finance and Property and includes the Council’s s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.</p>
<p><b>Conducting a regular review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit</b></p>	<p>Internal Audit were subject to an external assessment during 2018 as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The conclusion of that review was that Internal Audit ‘generally conforms’ to the PSIAS requirements, which is the highest compliance category used for this assessment.</p> <p>An update on progress of the review recommendations was provided to G&amp;E in November 2019. From the 4 recommendations made, 3 had been implemented with the remaining one being work in progress. From the 5 suggestions for improvement 4 had been implemented with the remaining one being work in progress.</p>

Theme	Comments
<p><b>Whistle blowing procedures for receiving and investigating complaints from staff or the public</b></p>	<p>The Council has policies in place, which are currently being reviewed by the Council's Audit Manager to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.</p> <p>The Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Money Laundering and Bribery Act policies were approved by G &amp; E in November 2019. These policies have links/make reference to the Whistleblowing Policy.</p>
<p><b>Identifying the development needs of Members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training.</b></p>	<p>The Member Development Programme was approved by Council in March 2020.</p> <p>The training needs and development of senior officers is dealt with via the appraisal system.</p>

## 7. Key Governance areas for improvement

7.1 The Council faces a number of issues and areas of significant change that will require consideration and action as appropriate over the coming years and these are:

- Delivering effective engagement - Ensuring effective engagement with stakeholders through which to hear the voice of the resident more
- Capacity to deliver projects - ensuring that the Council has sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to deliver its programme of projects while maintaining frontline services to residents and businesses.
- Improving Asset Management - ensuring that the Council maintains a comprehensive, asset register, that supports its decision making process for the enhancement, disposal and maintenance of assets.
- Commercial investment – The Council's significant investment in commercial property, transformation programme and pursuing commercialisation opportunities will continue to require effective governance arrangements around any proposed changes



## Annual Governance Statement

### 8. Assurance Summary

- 8.1 Good governance is about operating properly. It is the means by which the Council shows that it is taking decision for the good of its residents, in fair, equitable and open way. It also requires standards of behaviour that support good decision making – collective and individual integrity, openness and honesty. It is the foundation for the effective delivery of good quality services that meet the needs of the users. It is fundamental to demonstrating that public money is well spent. Without good governance, the Council would find it difficult to operate services successfully.
- 8.2 The Internal Audit Opinion for 2019/209 is that the Council’s framework of governance, risk management and management control is ‘reasonable’ and that audit testing carried out during the year has demonstrated controls to be working in practice. The assessments contained within this document highlight that there are effective arrangements in place to deliver good governance but that four key areas are highlighted to further improve our governance.
- 8.3 We propose, over the coming year, to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation during the year and as part of our next annual review.



**Lynne Doherty**  
**Leader of the Council**

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020



**Nick Carter**  
**Chief Executive**

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020

## Appendix B

## Action plan – 2019-20

Item	Action	Responsible officer	Progress
Financial management – Adult Social Care (ASC)	A review of the ASC forecast overspend position was undertaken by the Chief Executive and Audit Manager during 2018/19, and made a number of recommendations to strengthen the financial management arrangements within ASC and across the Council. These recommendations are being implemented according to an agreed plan and will be closely monitored for their effectiveness.	Chief Executive/Audit Manager	Complete
Financial management – Schools DSG	Regular reporting of School DSG funding performance to be embedded within existing financial performance arrangements.	<b>Head of Finance &amp; Property</b>	
Commercial	The Council's significant investment in commercial property, transformation programme and pursuing commercialisation opportunities will continue to require effective governance arrangements around any proposed changes	<b>Head of Legal services</b>	Carried forward to 2020-21 due to macro-economic position

## Action plan – 2020-21

Item	Action	Responsible officer	Date for completion
Delivering effective engagement - Ensuring effective engagement with stakeholders through which to hear the voice of the resident more	Completion of a new Engagement Strategy and approach.	<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>October 2020</b>
Capacity to deliver projects - Ensuring that the Council has sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to deliver its programme of projects while maintaining frontline services to residents and businesses.	Rollout of training programme on new project methodology across management	<b>Performance, Research &amp; consultation manager</b>	<b>Oct 2020</b>
	All new projects to be supported by business case through the project methodology	<b>Performance, Research &amp; consultation manager</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	Regular monitoring and management through corporate project governance	<b>Service Director (Strategy &amp; Governance)</b>	<b>March 2021</b>

## Annual Governance Statement

Item	Action	Responsible officer	Date for completion
Improving Asset Management - Ensure that the Council maintains a comprehensive, asset register, that supports its decision making process for the enhancement, disposal and maintenance of assets.	<p>Completion of all outstanding internal audit recommendations</p> <p>Completion of Asset challenge process through all asset types</p>	<p><b>Head of Finance &amp; property</b></p> <p><b>Property services manager</b></p>	<p><b>Dec 2020</b></p> <p><b>Dec 2021</b></p>
Commercial activity	The Council's significant investment in commercial property, transformation programme and pursuing commercialisation opportunities will continue to require effective governance arrangements around any proposed changes	<b>Service Director (Strategy &amp; Governance)</b>	<b>March 2021</b>