

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE 11 JULY 2023

GOVERNANCE UPDATE SENIOR MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES AGENDA ITEM: 11.2

Reason for Report

1. This report provides an update on the Senior Management Assurance Statement and the progress on the drafting of the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23
2. The Governance and Audit Committee's Terms of Reference requires Members to review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account the internal audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control.
3. Specific components of the AGS reported individually to the Audit Committee are the biannual Senior Management Assurance Statements (SMAS) and the AGS Action Plan of significant governance issues, following approval by the Senior Management Team.

Background

4. Senior Management Assurance Statements (SMAS) are used to assess governance maturity in application of the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' framework, developed by CIPFA / SOLACE.
5. Through the SMAS, each Director responds to 29 good governance statements using a 5-point maturity scale for their areas of responsibility ranging from 'not in place', 'limited application', 'mixed application', 'strong application' to 'embedded'. Prior to submitting their returns, each Director is required to obtain underlying assurances from their management teams to support a directorate-wide response to each statement.
6. The 29 Good Governance Statements can be found in the attached Appendix A. The questions have been both amended and extended in order to ensure that all areas of good governance are covered and with a focus on areas identified for improvement.
7. The Action Plan for 2021/22 had identified the need to embed into the self assessment the 5 ways of working in respect to the Future Generations Act. In addition, to extend and deepen the areas of SMT investigation in respect to compliance, risk and outcomes as well as gathering evidence on the quality of performance reviews..

Issues

Senior Management Assurance Statements

8. The Senior Management Assurance Statements have been completed for each directorate and have been informally discussed at Senior Management Team. In considering the individual statements, the Senior Management Statement is currently being drawn up and will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in September 2023 when the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 will be considered.
9. Each directorate undertook a Half-yearly self-assessment in November / December 2022 and this informed Challenge Sessions held by the Chief Executive with each directorate to consider the merits of the self-assessment, the progress made and identify any areas of concern.
10. The Annual Governance Statement will include the Senior Management Statement along with the statements from the Governance & Audit Committee and the Audit Manager. The Senior Management Statement will in its considerations set out the progress made against its actions and also set out its view of suggested actions for 2023/24.

Reason for Recommendation

11. To provide the Governance and Audit Committee with an update on Senior Management Assurance Statement and progress on the Annual Governance Statement.

Legal Implications

12. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

14. The Governance & Audit Committee to note the report.

Christopher Lee
Corporate Director Resources
11 July 2023

The following Appendices are attached:

Appendix A – Senior Management Assurance Statement Questions