

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE - 16 September 2016**

Title of paper:		ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2015/16	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):		Geoff Walker Director of Strategic Finance	Wards affected:
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Other colleagues who have provided input:			
Recommendation(s):			
1	To note the AGS 2015/16 set out at <b>Appendix 1</b> .		

### **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 This report presents the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which will be published with the City Council's Statement of Accounts.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The City Council's governance arrangements aim to ensure that it sets and meets its objectives and responsibilities in a timely, open, inclusive and honest manner. The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and through which it engages with and leads the community to which it is accountable. Every council and large organisation operates within a similar framework, which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, good practice principles and management processes.
- 2.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 specify that every financial year the Council must undertake a review of the effectiveness of its internal control and prepare an AGS.
- 2.3 The Audit Committee has the delegated authority for the formal approval of the AGS in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The AGS should be approved by the Audit Committee before it approves the Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Council
- 2.4 The 2007 CIPFA/SOLACE publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework" provides the principles by which good governance should be measured. This was adopted as the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance at the Executive Board meeting on 20 May 2008.
- 2.5 In 2012 CIPFA/SOLACE produced an updated guidance note covering the delivery of good governance in local government and how an authority's arrangements can be reflected in the AGS. The City Council has incorporated this guidance in both the evaluation of its governance arrangements and in the production of its AGS.

- 2.6 It is good practice to approve as close to publication of the final Statement of Accounts as possible. The timetable for production of the AGS was approved at the February 2016 meeting of this Committee. This final statement has been brought to the September meeting of this Committee for approval alongside the Statement of Accounts
- 2.7 The AGS reflects the governance arrangements operating within the Council and its significant partners. Responsibility for its production lies with the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) / Acting Director of Strategic Finance.
- 2.8 Assurance used in compiling the final report was derived from several sources: Corporate Directors and other key colleagues including the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and the Head of Internal Audit have reviewed the governance arrangements according to their respective responsibilities and have given assurance and commented as to its effectiveness. A similar exercise was conducted with the Council's significant partners and groups. Information obtained from independent external reviews is also used to inform this assurance.
- 2.9 In accordance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance the final AGS will be signed by the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, and the CFO, and will contain the following information:
- an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance;
  - an indication of the level of assurance that the systems and processes that comprise the Authority's governance arrangements can provide;
  - a brief description of the key element of the governance framework, including those of significant groups or partners;
  - a brief description of the processes undertaken to maintain and review the governance arrangements, including some comment on the work undertaken by the Council, Executive Board, Committees with governance remits and Internal Audit;
  - an outline of the actions taken or proposed to deal with significant governance issues.
- 2.10 This statement maps the policies, procedures and initiatives the Council has put in place to address the governance issues embodied in its Local Code. Three new items of note have been included regarding Robin Hood Energy, EnviroEnergy, and Blueprint Partnership. Two items are no longer considered of note regarding Revaluation of the Housing Revenue Account in 2014/15 and Icelandic Banks. In addition a note on Brexit has been included within the note on Review of Local Government Funding & Balancing the Council's Budget.
- 2.11 An interim version of this statement was discussed at this committee on July 1st 2016. The only changes to the statement since that date are additional items of note in respect of Brexit and Blueprint Partnership.

### **3 BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING EXEMPT OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

None.

**PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

- CIPFA/SOLACE - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (Framework)
- CIPFA/SOLACE - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Guidance Note -2012
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- Executive Board 20 May 2008 – Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Audit Committee Papers February 2016 – Annual Governance Statement - Progress Made To Date On Issues Reported 2014/15 And Process For Producing 2015/16 Statement
- Audit Committee Papers July 2016 – Interim Annual Governance Statement