

20 JUNE 2016

TITLE OF REPORT: Members' Assurance Statements 2015/16

REPORT OF: Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Committee of the opinion of Members of the Cabinet on the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements to feed into the Annual Governance Statement.

Background

- 2 The Audit Committee agreed on 1 February 2016 an assurance framework which would provide evidence for the completion of the Annual Governance Statement. Assurances from Members of the Cabinet on the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements are fundamental within the framework.

Governance Framework

- 3 The Council agreed at its meeting of 26 April 2007 a Code of Corporate Governance based on the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance "Delivering good governance in local government". The guidance and the Code are based on six principles of governance.
 - Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the 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 Council 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 managing 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.

- 4 The Council's governance framework ensures that these principles are fully integrated in the conduct of the Council's business as well as establishing a means of demonstrating compliance.
- 5 The Council's Constitution sets out the role of the Cabinet as follows:
 - To lead change and make recommendations for change to the Council, in consultation with a range of stakeholders;
 - To ensure that the Council's priorities within the policy framework and budget are implemented, making decisions within that framework where appropriate;
 - To monitor the implementation of the budget and policy framework through taking a lead role on Best Value and through co-ordination with the Overview and Scrutiny role;
 - To provide a public face on specific issues.
- 6 Assurance was sought from Members who served in the Cabinet during 2015/16, in the form of a self assessment statement, on the effectiveness they felt could be placed on the Council's corporate governance arrangements, as outlined in the Code.
- 7 Statements of Assurance were provided by all Members of the Cabinet, excluding the Leader who signs the overall Annual Governance Statement. Cabinet Members considered evidence of the Council's governance arrangements against each of the six principles detailed above, in preparation of the statements. All Cabinet Members considered that governance arrangements are effective.

Overall Opinion

- 8 Based on the evidence identified in the assurance statements from Members of the Cabinet and the arrangements for the oversight of key management processes, governance arrangements are considered to be effective.

Recommendation

- 9 The Committee is asked to note the assurances of Members of Cabinet and the evidence on oversight and endorse the opinion that the Council's governance arrangements are effective.

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