

19 June 2017

Title of Report **Members' Assurance Statements 2016/17**

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 and Standards Committee agreed on 6 March 2017 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 adopted a Local Code of Governance in 2007, which set out how it complies with best practice in relation to its governance arrangements. This Code was recently updated and agreed by the Audit and Standards Committee on 6 March 2017. In addition, CIPFA/SOLACE issued a revised approach to local governance, set out in their Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework. The Framework contains seven principles for good governance, which are being used as the basis for assessing the governance arrangements throughout the Council. The seven principles are:
 - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law;
 - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainability, economic, social and environmental benefits;
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
 - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management; and

- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 4 The Council's governance framework is consistent with these principles which ensure they are fully integrated in the conduct of the Council's business.
- 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; and
 - To provide a public face on specific issues.
- 6 Assurance was sought from Members who served in the Cabinet during 2016/17, in the form of a self assessment statement, on the effectiveness they felt could be placed on the Council's corporate governance arrangements, by reference to the principles set out above.
- 7 Statements of Assurance were sought from 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 seven principles detailed above, in preparation of the statements. All Cabinet Members who responded 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.

Contact name: Craig Oakes Ext. 3711