

Title of Report:	Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 – Internal Audit Review of Managers’ Assurances
Report of:	Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Resources and Digital

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The report informs the Committee of the outcome of the work by the Internal Audit Service in reviewing the assurances provided by Service Directors to inform the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement.

Background

- 2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require an Authority to produce an Annual Governance Statement setting out its governance arrangements and reviewing their effectiveness.
- 3 The Audit and Standards Committee agreed on 8 March 2021 an assurance framework which would provide evidence for the completion of the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement. Assurances from managers on the effectiveness of controls they have in place were a fundamental part of this framework.
- 4 Service Directors were asked to build on the work carried out in previous years and complete a self-assessment assurance statement detailing the level of assurance they felt they could place on their key control and governance processes. They were required to state whether they agreed or disagreed that the processes they had in place provided an effective level of assurance. There was also a requirement to detail the evidence to support this assessment. Internal Audit undertake an annual review of the assurance statements to ensure:
 - Where key controls are not providing a sufficient level of assurance action has been taken to address these areas.
 - Where key controls are providing a good level of assurance, evidence exists to support this assessment.
- 5 The 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement audit was carried out using a theme-based approach across the Council. All Service Directors were required to provide evidence to support their declarations made on the Assurance Statement in response to the following questions:

- Data quality and performance management
- Covid19 assessments and business continuity arrangements.

In response to specific questions raised by members of the Committee, additional assurance reviews were also undertaken in relation to succession planning.

Review Outcomes

- 6 The audit concluded that systems and controls were operating well and no corporate recommendations have been made.
- 7 Some Service specific findings in relation to Data Quality and Performance Management have been addressed directly with the relevant Service Directors.
- 8 The overall conclusion of this work is that the systems and processes for the completion of the Managers' Assurance Statements are effective and that they provided a good level of assurance for the 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendation

- 9 The Committee is asked to note the report.