

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**14 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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**Title:**

**Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020**

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**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr John Ward, Leader of the Council; Cllr Paul Follow, Deputy Leader of the Council

**Head of Service:** Peter Vickers, Head of Finance and Property

**Key decision:** No

**Access:** Public

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### **1. Purpose and summary**

The purpose of this report is for the Audit Committee to consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year ended 31 March 2020.

### **2. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Audit Committee approves the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/2020.

### **3. Reason for the recommendation**

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require an authority to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with the published Statement of Accounts. That statement is the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 3.2 The AGS reports publicly on how the Council has complied with the governance code, 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework' published by CIPFA/SOLACE.
- 3.3 The AGS describes how the corporate governance arrangements have been working over the year, describes any governance issues that have arisen and how they will be addressed. It also describes the arrangements put in place to ensure that the Council achieves its objectives and the means by which it gains assurances that those arrangements are working. The Audit Committee considered a draft at its March 2020 meeting and members have also had an informal run through on this latest statement in August. Each Audit Committee meeting agenda includes the opportunity for members to raise and discuss emerging governance matters.

- 3.4 The AGS will be included with the Statement of Accounts as part of the Annual Financial Report for 2019/2020.
- 3.5 The AGS is included with the Agenda as a separate document at Annexe 1.

#### **4. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan**

- 4.1 The aim of the AGS is to ensure that, in achieving the Council's corporate priorities, Waverley acts in the public interest at all times.

#### **5. Implications of decision**

##### **5.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)**

There are no direct resource implications resulting from the AGS for 2019/2020.

##### **5.2 Risk management**

Corporate governance generally refers to the systems and processes by which organisations are directed, controlled, led and held to account. The AGS describes how the Council's corporate governance arrangements have been working during the year and the effectiveness of the systems of internal control and the assurances gained from those systems.

##### **5.3 Legal**

The AGS is required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015..

##### **5.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion**

There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report. Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

##### **5.5 Climate emergency declaration**

The Governance Framework ensures there is a sound system of governance and control when managing and delivering the vision set out in the Corporate Strategy. This includes the governance arrangements over the Climate emergency declaration.

#### **6. Consultation and engagement**

The Audit Committee were invited to attend a briefing session on the 20 August 2020 to go through the requirements of the Annual Governance Statement and their responsibilities in approving it ahead of the Audit Committee.

#### **7. Other options considered**

- 7.1 The AGS is required to be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council and then approved by a delegated committee.

#### **8. Governance journey**

- 8.1 Once approved the AGS will form part of the Annual Financial Report and be

published on the Council's website.

**Annexes:**

Annexe 1 – Annual Governance Statement

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**Background Papers**

**There are / are no** background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**

Name: Rosie Plaistowe  
Position: Accountant Manager  
Telephone: 0148 3523255  
Email: [rosie.plaistowe@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.plaistowe@waverley.gov.uk)

Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: date

Head of Finance: date

Strategic Director: date

Portfolio Holder: date