

The Annual Governance Statement - Review Process

1. A coordinated approach to providing assurance for the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement has again been utilised with senior managers from across the Council and group of companies completing assurance statements for each of their areas acknowledging responsibility for internal control and risk management. Each of these managers have certified or otherwise their satisfaction with arrangements in place during 2019/20.
2. The review process also examined a wide range of internal control and governance processes, which included:
 - engaging with Senior Management and other key officers within the Council, where appropriate;
 - obtaining and reviewing External Audit and Inspection reports, Internal Audit reports and management monitoring reports;
 - the scrutiny and evaluation of the information obtained;
 - determining significant control issues within the definition agreed for disclosure; and
 - consultation with the Corporate Leadership Board including S151 and Monitoring Officer.
3. The consideration of the draft AGS by the Audit Committee is key part of the review and approval process.
4. The AGS explains how well the Council has complied with its Code of Corporate Governance (Code) which is based upon the following seven core principles:
 - 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 sustainable 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 individuals within it;
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management;
 - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
5. The AGS summarises the actions and improvements which have been taken to enhance governance arrangements in 2019/20 before setting out significant governance and control issues
6. In determining the significant governance issues to disclose, the following factors have been considered on whether the issues had:
 - seriously prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principal objective;
 - resulted in the need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved or had resulted in a significant diversion of resources from another aspect of the business;
 - a material impact on the accounts;
 - been considered as significant for this purpose by the audit committee or equivalent;
 - attracted significant public interest or had seriously damaged the reputation of the Council;
 - resulted in formal action being taken by the Section 151 Officer/Monitoring Officer;
 - received significant adverse commentary in external inspection reports and which the Council has not been able to address in a timely manner.