

Report to: AUDIT COMMITTEE

Report of: Interim Director for Finance & Governance

Date of Meeting: 25 November 2020

Subject: 2019/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Wards Affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) forms part of the Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 and reports on the Council's internal control regime.
- 1.2. Section 6 of the AGS includes 8 key issues for the Council which may impact on the organisation's governance arrangements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To approve the updated Annual Governance Statement that will be included in the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2. To agree that the arrangements for the management of the items included in Section 6 will be reported to the Audit Committee during the year.

3. Background

- 3.1 One of the requirements for the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is that it should reflect the governance arrangements for the financial year to which it relates, up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts. The AGS was originally reported to Audit Committee on 30 June 2020. It has been updated for minor amendments primarily relating to the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2 The AGS forms part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts. The Statement of Accounts will be available, post audit, at this meeting, on 25 November 2020.
- 3.3 The significant issues raised in the Assurance Statement and audit processes are summarised in Section 6 of the AGS. This section comments very broadly on the Council's achievement of its central objectives and external assessments, it raises issues arising from joint working with partners and refers to significant matters highlighted by the annual review of internal control.

4. Legal and Resource Implications

- 4.1 The AGS is a requirement of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Regulation 6(1)(b) and meets the corporate governance best practice recommendations. The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 were published on 30 April 2020. These regulations amend the publication dates of the draft accounts to no later than 31 August 2020 and the audited accounts to 30 November for local authorities. There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

5. Risk Management & Equality Impact Assessment Issues

- 5.1 The Statement forms part of the Council's risk management approach and the relevant issues are those considered in the attached schedule.

6. Compliance Issues

- 6.1 The AGS forms part of the statutory requirements for the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts.
- 6.2 The Council's continued improvement in responding to the issues referred to in the Statement will complement the development and delivery of the Council of the Future's objectives.

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Rebecca Hellard – Interim Director for Finance & Governance

Contact Officer: Martin Stevens

Telephone No: 0121 303 4667

e-mail address: martin.stevens@birmingham.gov.uk