

Report to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

12 December 2024

Subject:	Annual Governance Statement 2023-24
Director:	Alex Thompson Executive Director, Finance and Transformation
Contact Officer:	Mike Jones Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director – Legal & Assurance mike_jones1@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendation

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24.

2 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 To inform the Committee of the contents of the Council’s Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

Growing Up in Sandwell	The Council has adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and underpins the Corporate Plan. The framework requires the Council to prepare an Annual Governance Statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which it complies with its code of governance on an
Living in Sandwell	
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	
Healthy in Sandwell	
One Council One Team	

	annual basis, including how it has monitored the effectiveness of the annual governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. Every local authority must prepare a governance statement to accompany its Statement of Accounts.
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4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 4.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 4.3 The Council has adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and completes and publishes a governance statement with its statement of accounts.
- 4.4 The statement is signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, who have a responsibility to ensure that the document is supported by reliable evidence and accurately reflects the Council's internal control environment.
- 4.5 The governance statement has been prepared using the assurances provided from a variety of sources including external and internal audit, the strategic risk register, and the various other external reviews that have taken place.
- 4.6 As a result of delays in the completion of the Council's recent Statement of Accounts, the governance statement can only now begin to be finalised. As such the statement should continue to operate up to the date of the approval of the Statement of Accounts. A further review of the statement may be required prior to their completion in order to ensure the statement remains valid.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24. As such, there is no alternative option.

6 Implications

Resources:	There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.
Legal and Governance:	The Council is required to prepare a governance statement to report publicly on the extent to which it complies with its code of governance, including how it has monitored the effectiveness of the governance arrangements in the year and on any planned changes in the coming period. The Council's governance statement must accompany its Statement of Accounts.
Risk:	The Annual Governance Statement takes into account the whole of the Council's risk management framework.
Equality:	It was not necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no direct health and wellbeing implications from this report.
Social Value	There are no direct social value implications from this report.
Climate Change:	There are no direct climate change implications from this report.
Corporate Parenting:	There are no direct corporate parenting implications from this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix One – DRAFT Annual Governance Statement 2023-24.

8. Background Papers

None.