

Report to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

20 February 2025

Subject:	Annual Governance Statement 2023-24
Director:	Alex Thompson Executive Director, Finance and Transformation
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1 Recommendation

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

2 Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The annual governance statement was last presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 12 December 2024. The statement should continue to operate up to the date of the approval of the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2 Since the last meeting, a further review of the statement has been undertaken. A new style format has also been introduced that will provide a platform that will be built on for the next governance statement for 2024-25 and is re-presented for information purposes.

3 How does this deliver the 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 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.
Living in Sandwell	
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	
Healthy in Sandwell	
One Council One Team	

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 There have been no key changes to the content of the governance statement since it was last reviewed by the Committee in December 2024.

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 account of 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

Annual Governance Statement 2023- 24

8. Background Papers

None