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| Council/Committee: | Audit and Risk Assurance Committee |
| Report Title | Updated Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 |
| Date of Meeting | 16 February 2026 |
| Report Author | Mike Jones Monitoring Officer, Service Director – Governance |
| Lead Officer | Alex Thompson Executive Director of Finance and Transformation |
| Wards Affected | All (All Wards); |
| Appendices (if any) | 1. Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 |

1. Executive Summary

1.1 To share with the Committee of the contents of the updated Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:-

- Review and comment on the updated Annual Governance Statement 2024/25.

3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

3.1 To inform the Committee of the updated Annual Governance Statement 2024/25.

4 Alternative Options Consider

4.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee of the updated Annual Governance Statement 2024/25. As such, there is no alternative option.

5 Context and Key Issues

5.1 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.

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 The governance statement was 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.
- 5.6 The governance statement was last presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 18 September 2025. At that time, it was noted that the statement should continue to operate up to the date of the approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25.
- 5.7 Therefore, a further review of the statement has since been undertaken, and it has been updated to reflect key governance activities that have taken place since September 2025.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial or resource implications directly arising as a result of this report.

7. Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1 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.

8. Risks

- 8.1 The Annual Governance Statement takes into account the whole of the Council's risk management framework.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

9.1 It was not necessary to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment

10. Background Documents

10.1 None.

11. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?

11.1 This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Themes:-

- Growing up in Sandwell
- Living in Sandwell
- Healthy in Sandwell
- Thriving Economy in Sandwell
- One Council One Team Approach.

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 Council 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.