

Report to: Audit and Governance Committee, 10th July 2024

Report of: Corporate Director – Planning and Governance

Subject: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee approves the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 at Appendix 1 for sign off by the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director for inclusion in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

2. Annual Governance Statement

- 2.1 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, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging these responsibilities, the Council must ensure that there is good governance and a sound system of internal control in place, which facilitate the effective exercise of the Council's functions, and which include arrangements for the management of risk.
- 2.2 The Council's governance arrangements have been reviewed and an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) has been drafted and is attached to this report at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3 The AGS is a document which provides the Council and its stakeholders with:
- Information about the arrangements in place for good governance and the robustness of those arrangements, and
 - An assurance about the degree of compliance and the need for improvement in governance arrangements.
- 2.4 The AGS sets out the Council's assessment of how its own governance arrangements have fared this year, as the Council undertook a savings programme, maintained core services alongside delivery of major projects and new initiatives.
- 2.5 Overall the Council's assessment of its governance performance is positive. The ongoing delay in publication of the external audit opinion is noted as a significant concern.

3. Implications

3.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

None directly arising from this report.

3.2 Legal and Governance Implications

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control.

Once approved, the AGS will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service) on behalf of the Council. The agreed statement will be published and will accompany the Council's Statement of Accounts when they are complete.

3.3 Risk Implications

Maintaining high standards of governance will help to protect the Council's reputation and its ability to deliver corporate and service priorities.

3.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The Council operates through a governance framework which brings together legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. This framework defines the principles which underpin the Council's governance.

3.5 Equality Implications

None directly arising from this report.

3.6 Human Resources Implications

None directly arising from this report.

3.7 Health and Safety Implications

None directly arising from this report.

Ward(s):

All

Contact Officer:

Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning and Governance

Tel: 01905 722019; Email: sian.stroud@worcester.gov.uk

Appendix 1:

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24