

Report For:	Audit Committee
Meeting Date:	Audit 30 May 2019
Part:	Part 1 - Open
If Part 2, reason:	Choose a reason



SUMMARY

Title of Report:	Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018-19 and the Local Code Of Governance 2019.
Officer Contact: Direct Dial: Email:	Michael Howard 01494 421 357 Mike.howard@wycombe.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	All
Reason for the Decision:	<p>The Council is required to review the effectiveness of its system of internal control and publish an Annual Governance Statement with their annual Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>The publishing of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is the formal reporting of the Council's governance arrangements: it is an opportunity to report on the quality of our governance arrangements and identify actions to improve those arrangements.</p> <p>The Council has adopted the guidance, issued by CIPFA/SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016" to produce, both a Local Code of Governance and an Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The Audit Committee terms of reference require it to review the "Council's Framework for Corporate Governance"</p> <p>The Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS)</p>

follows the guidance as issued in 2016 by CIPFA /SOLACE in its publication “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016”

The draft AGS for the year ending 31st March 2019 is attached at Appendix A, along with the Local Code, Appendix B. These detail how the Council has had due regard to the guidance contained in the framework and also meets the requirements of the Account and Audit Regulations 2015.

The Local Code and the draft AGS has been prepared by the Business Assurance Manager in consultation with the Strategic Management Board.

Following the Governments decision in November 2018, to abolish Wycombe District Council by 31st March 2020 and to create a new Unitary Council from 1st April 2020, has had a significant impact on the time, resources and benefits that are required and available to implement previously agreed improvement areas and this is reflected in the overall summary contained in the Local Code at Appendix B to this report.

In addition as the Council moves into 2019/20 this will be an exceptional year, however resources will be available to ensure that there is not a decline in the key assurance processes and we continue to be mindful of our overarching corporate governance responsibilities and we will ensure that Wycombe continues to operate within the regulatory framework up till the point of abolition.

Wycombe District Council needs to be able to ensure that not only are its governance arrangements sound but are capable of being evidenced as being sound.

The improvement areas highlighted are also included in the Council's Strategic Risk Register, where applicable, which is being used as the formal mechanism for recording the governance issues and the resultant improvement tasks, as it integrates the governance actions, thus avoiding duplication and provides consideration of issues together.

<p>Proposed Decision/Recommendation:</p>	<p>That:</p> <p>The Committee is advised to review and endorse the 2019 Local Code of Governance and the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19, prior to submission to the Leader and Chief Executive for formal sign off alongside the Annual Accounts.</p>
<p>Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications</p>	<p>Risk: N/A</p> <p>Equalities N/A:</p> <p>Health & Safety N/A:</p>
<p>Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer: Relevant legal and governance issues are referred to within the report.</p> <p>S.151 Officer: There are no direct financial implications.</p>
<p>Consultees:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Options:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Next Steps:</p>	<p>The final version of the Annual Governance Statement will be submitted to the Leader and Chief Executive for formal sign-off as part of the Final Accounts process.</p> <p>The approved Annual Governance Statement will be published on the Council's website along with the Council's Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>Strategic Management Board continues to have clear oversight of the Strategic Risk Register through nominated Risk Owners whose role is to ensure that the risks for which they have operational responsibility are clearly identified, subject to a detailed evaluation process considering the control environment as mitigation and the identification of improvements tasks that are required to minimise the level of risk exposure faced by the Council.</p>
<p>Background Papers:</p>	<p>CIPFA/SOLACE: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016.</p>

Abbreviations:

AGS - Annual Governance Statement
CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance &
Accountancy
SOLACE – Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

Appendices to this report are as follows:

Appendix 1 - Draft AGS for the year ending 31st March 2019

Appendix 2 - Local Code of Governance

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