

## **Audit and Standards Committee - Tuesday 20 February 2024**

### **Annual Governance Statement**

#### **Recommendation**

I recommend that:

- a. To approve the updated Annual Governance Statement (AGS) to reflect the findings from the published Childrens Services Ofsted Report.

#### **Local Member Interest:**

N/A

### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Director for Corporate Services**

#### **Report**

##### **Background**

1. The attached AGS has been prepared in line with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) issued in 2016 and covers the following headings:
  - a. What are we responsible for
  - b. The aim of the governance framework
  - c. The governance framework
  - d. Review of how effective our governance framework is
  - e. Significant governance issues
2. Following on from the above, Appendix 2 reproduces "The Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance Framework including the system of internal control – 2022/23." This document has been instrumental in producing the AGS and details appropriate sources of assurance.
3. At the 12 December 2023 Members of the Committee approved the draft 2022/23 AGS. After the meeting the full Children's Ofsted inspection report was received on 12 January 2024. The overall rating given was 'requires improvement to be good'. Therefore, the draft AGS has been updated to include the key findings and recommendations from the report. These are highlighted in yellow for ease of reference. Given that the External Audit for the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts remains

outstanding, the AGS is expected to be updated to include any key governance matters that emerge up to the point that the accounts are finalised. Therefore, in accordance with best practice, Members are requested to consider the amendments and approved the revised draft AGS.

### **Equalities Implications**

4. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

5. The preparation and publication of the AGS is necessary to meet the statutory requirement set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

6. There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. Significant internal control issues with specific reference to mitigation actions emanating from the Corporate Risk Register will need to be considered against the resources available and the Council's "appetite for risk".

### **Risk Implications**

7. An inadequate Governance Framework can lead to loss of reputation and finance and external censure.

### **Climate Change Implications**

8. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework – 2016 Edition including Guidance Notes  
Annual Governance Statement & Annex - 2020/21  
Staffordshire County Council Code of Corporate Governance – published 2022

Appendix 1 – Updated Annual Governance Statement – 2022 / 2022  
Appendix 2 – Updated Report of the Corporate Governance Working Group

## Contact Details

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