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| REPORT TO: | AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE (SPECIAL) | AGENDA ITEM: 8 |
| DATE OF MEETING: | 29th JULY 2020 | CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED |
| REPORT FROM: | HEAD OF LEGAL and DEMOCRATIC SERVICES | OPEN |
| MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT: | ARDIP KAUR (01283 595715) ardip.kaur@southderbyshire.gov.uk | DOC: |
| SUBJECT: | ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20 | REF: |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | ALL | TERMS OF REFERENCE: AS 04 |

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To recommend to Finance and Management Committee the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year ended 31 March 2020.
- 1.2 To authorise the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer to sign the Annual Governance Statement following Audit.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To submit the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2019/20 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended).

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 Governance is about how South Derbyshire District Council ensures that it does the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner. As such, it comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages and leads its local community.

Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

- 3.2 The AGS is the formal statement that records and publishes a council's governance arrangements; it is a statutory requirement to publish an AGS on an annual basis.
- 3.3 Guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) states that the production and publication of the AGS, are the final stages of an on-going review of governance and not activities that can be planned and viewed in isolation. Compilation of the AGS involves the Council in:

- reviewing the adequacy of its governance arrangements
- knowing where it needs to improve these arrangements
- communicating to stakeholders how better governance leads to best quality public services

3.4 The proposed AGS for 2019/20 is attached. It is overseen by the Council's Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Council's Leadership Team. The AGS has been produced in accordance with the CIPFA guidelines and includes commentary on:

- the governance environment and how this is reviewed to determine its effectiveness; and
- issues of significance that require addressing as part of the review of effectiveness

Compiling the AGS

- 3.6 The aim of the AGS is to set out established processes and to reflect on any matters arising during the year. Much of the content of the AGS will already be known and may have been reported and noted elsewhere in other Council forums.
- 3.7 As the governance framework at the Council is relatively well established, the existing AGS is used as the basis of the annual review. The lead officers in compiling and reviewing the AGS are the Council's Monitoring and Chief Finance Officers.
- 3.8 In monitoring the AGS, these officers review policy committee reports and decisions, together with Leadership Team minutes to ensure that any relevant matters are included in the AGS.
- 3.9 Work in other forums such as the Health and Safety Committee, Licensing and Appeals Committee and the Joint Negotiating Group, where potential matters affecting the AGS are reported, are also reviewed. These committees and forums are usually attended by the Monitoring and Chief Finance Officers.
- 3.10 In addition, investigations that may have been undertaken by the Information Commissioner, Data Protection Registrar and Local Government Ombudsman are also reviewed. Any legal action brought against the Council is also reviewed to determine its impact on the Council's governance arrangements.
- 3.11 When the draft statement is complete, the Chief Executive, other corporate directors and Heads of Service are consulted and asked to highlight any other matters or to provide additional feedback.

Style and Format

- 3.12 The Statement for 2019/20, has been redesigned to make it more streamlined, readable and user friendly for stakeholders. It has been explicitly aligned to the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance which is based on 7 key principles as detailed in the AGS.

- 3.13 In addition, the Statement will not be directly included within the Financial Statements but will be published as a stand-alone document with the aim of making it more readily available and accessible.

Work Plans

- 3.14 A work plan, considered and approved by the Audit Sub-Committee in May 2019, was progressed during 2019/20 to address matters identified to maintain and strengthen the governance environment. These are detailed within the AGS.
- 3.15 The proposed work plan for 2020/21 is also detailed in the AGS. These actions have been identified to maintain robust governance and to ensure arrangements keep abreast of a changing environment. The work programme includes:
- To review compliance with best practice standards recommended by the Government Committee on Standards in Public Life.
 - To review outcomes from a staff survey to be conducted in October 2020.
 - To implement a new Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020 to 2024.
 - To deliver the work programme for Organisational Development.
 - An audit of the effectiveness of the Council's Risk System.
 - To develop customer contact points for reporting and escalating issues during an emergency or business continuity incident.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 Corporate governance affects the whole authority and as part of the process, all members of senior management have been consulted and made aware of its contents. Generally, senior managers are briefed at corporate meetings in respect of governance generally, together with the AGS.
- 5.2 Maintaining good governance underpins delivery of the priorities contained in the Corporate Plan.
- 5.3 The AGS itself will be signed by the Council's Leader and most senior officer, the Chief Executive. This also emphasises that corporate governance is at the centre of the leadership and management of the Council.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The AGS is designed to act as a public assurance statement that the Council has a sound system of corporate governance, designed to help deliver services in a proper, inclusive, open and accountable manner.