

Title: Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 Action Plan: Review of Progress

Lead Officer: Richard Barr

Portfolio Holder: Councillors Day and Hales

Wards of the District directly affected: None directly impacted

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	08/02/23	Councillors Day and Hales
Finance	02/02/23	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services	Not applicable	
Chief Executive	02/02/23	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change	Not applicable	
Head of Service(s)	02/02/23	Andrew Rollins
Section 151 Officer	02/02/23	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	02/02/23	Andrew Jones
Leadership Co-ordination Group	02/02/23	Various
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes/ No Recommendation to: Cabinet / Council Committee	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No/Yes	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No/Yes, Paragraphs:	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No/Yes, Forward Plan item – scheduled for (date)	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes/No	

Summary

The purpose of this report is for Committee to review the progress that is being made in addressing the 'Significant Governance Issues' facing the Council as set out in its Annual Governance Statement 2021/22. The appendix accompanying this report details the progress in addressing the Significant Governance Issues.

Recommendation

That Committee should review the Action Plan set out in the Appendix and confirm whether it is satisfied with the progress being made in addressing the Significant Governance Issues pertaining to the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22.

1 Reason for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The recommendation will help fulfil Members' responsibility for effective corporate governance within the Council and provide assurance to Members that the governance issues identified as part of the compilation of the Annual Governance Statement are being addressed.

2 Background/Information

2.1 Corporate Governance in Local Authorities

- 2.1.1 CIPFA/SOLACE emphasise that corporate governance is everyone's business and define it as:

"How the local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities." CIPFA/SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives)

- 2.1.2 CIPFA/SOLACE has issued a framework and guidance on delivering good governance in local government. The framework is built on the six core principles set out in the Good Governance Standard for Public Services that were themselves developed from earlier work by Cadbury and Nolan. The principles in relation to local government as set out in the framework are:

- a clear definition of the body's purpose and focusing on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- members and officers are working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective;

- engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Both the Annual Governance Statement and the Council's Code of Corporate Governance reflect these six themes.

2.2 **Annual Governance Statement**

2.2.1 The production of an Annual Governance Statement is a statutory requirement for local authorities (Regulation 6 of The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015).

2.2.2 The CIPFA Financial Advisory Network has published an advisory document entitled "The Annual Governance Statement: Rough Guide for Practitioners". Its advice is that the Annual Governance Statement is a key corporate document and the most senior member and the most senior officer (Leader and Chief Executive respectively) have joint responsibility as signatories for its accuracy and completeness. It advises that it should be owned by all senior members and officers of the authority and that it is essential that there is buy-in at the top level of the organisation. It advises that the work associated with its production should not be delegated to a single officer.

2.2.3 The Leader and Chief Executive of the Council as signatories to the Annual Governance Statement need to ensure that it accurately reflects the governance framework for which they are responsible. To achieve this they will rely on many sources of assurance, such as that from:

- Members of the Council
- Deputy Chief Executives and Service Area Managers
- the Responsible Financial Officer
- the Monitoring Officer
- the Audit and Risk Manager
- performance and risk management systems
- third parties, e.g. partnerships
- external audit and other review agencies.

2.3 **The Significant Governance Issues**

2.3.1 The governance issues facing the Council have been identified from production of the statutory Annual Governance Statement and are summarised in the Action Plan element of the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22.

2.3.2 The appendix accompanying this report sets out the progress in addressing those issues. Progress is reported by the officers leading on them and has been endorsed by SLT at a recent meeting.

3 **Alternative Options**

3.1 The report is not based on 'project appraisal' so this section is not applicable.

4 **Legal Implications**

4.1 Include a summary of the legal or human rights implications of the proposal.
Not applicable.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 Include a summary of the financial implications of the proposal.

Not applicable

6 Business Strategy

6.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Business Strategy which sets out key areas for service delivery. Each proposed decision should set out how the report contributes to the delivery of these strategic aims. If it does not contribute to these aims or has a negative effect on them the report should explain why that is the case.

6.1.1 External Impacts

People - Health, Homes, Communities

Services - Green, Clean, Safe

Money- Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment

Although there are no direct policy implications, corporate governance will be a major factor in shaping the Policy Framework and Council policies.

6.1.2 Internal Impacts

People - Effective Staff

Services - Maintain or Improve Services

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term

Although there are no direct policy implications, corporate governance will be a major factor in shaping the Policy Framework and Council policies.

7 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

7.1 Effective corporate governance can assist the Council achieve its environmental and climate emergency objectives.

8 Analysis of the Effects on Equality

8.1 Effective corporate governance can help the Council achieve its equality obligations.

9 Data Protection

9.1 Effective corporate governance can help the Council achieve its data protection objectives.

10 Health and Wellbeing

10.1 Effective corporate governance can help the Council achieve its health and wellbeing objectives.

11 Risk Assessment

11.1 The whole report is about risks and the risk environment. Clearly there are governance-related risks associated with weak internal control, risk management and governance processes.

12 Consultation

12.1 Please refer to 'header page' of this report.

Background papers:

All Papers referred to in this report are published documents.

Supporting documents:

Minutes of Joint Management Team and Senior Leadership Team.