

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet
Lead Director	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance and Georgia Harvey, Senior Information Governance Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Attached at Appendix A is the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to provide assurance on the Council's governance arrangements. Audit Governance and Standards Committee is required to approve the statement prior to signing by the Leader and Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the Annual Governance Statement at Appendix A be approved and submitted to the Leader for signature.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	24 July 2023
Cabinet	26 July 2023

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the Council's priorities are understood and delivered</p>	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>Effective corporate governance arrangements ensure the Council's priorities are understood and delivered</p>	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section at paragraph 5.1	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Financial	The action plan may have resource implications. These will be identified as projects come forward.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Legal	<p>Regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires all local authorities to:</p> <p>a) conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control which (a)</p>	Mid-Kent Legal Team

	<p>facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk; and</p> <p>(b) prepare an annual governance statement;</p> <p>Under the Council’s Constitution the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee is to adopt and review the production of the Council’s Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Statement demonstrates measures are in place to ensure good governance arrangements which enable the Council to meet its statutory requirements.</p>	
Information Governance	Data protection is covered in the statement and action will continue into 2023-24	Information Governance Team
Equalities	Effective corporate governance arrangements include behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting rule of law as set out in the code of corporate governance.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No implications	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Procurement	No implications	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and it aligns with the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan	Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Each year the Council reviews its governance arrangements to ensure compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance. The purpose of the review is to provide assurance that governance arrangements are adequate, operating effectively and to identify action which is planned to ensure effective governance in the future. The outcome of the review takes the form of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) at **Appendix A** prepared on behalf of the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.
 - 2.2 Overall, we can confirm that the Council has the appropriate systems and processes in place. Whilst we are satisfied the governance arrangements in general work well our review has identified additional actions to ensure good standards of governance are maintained. This year all principles have been graded as assured.
 - 2.3 Updates on the actions will be provided to the Audit Governance and Standards Committee on a six-monthly basis and kept under review by the internal Corporate Governance Group.
 - 2.5 Several improvement actions were identified in the 2022/23 action plan and the table on pages 25-26 of **Appendix A** shows progress.
 - 2.6 The areas for improvement in 2023-2024 are set out on pages 27-28 of **Appendix A**.
 - 2.7 The Local Code of Corporate Governance was rewritten in 2017 and was refreshed in 2022 following the change in governance arrangements. It has been scheduled for review in October 2023 and will be submitted to the Audit Governance and Standards Committee.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory requirement and provides assurances as to the Council's governance arrangements.
 - 3.2 The Committee is asked to approve the Annual Governance Statement as it has been presented or make amendments.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement considers and gives assurance to the Council's approach to risk management.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The Annual Governance Statement includes an assessment of the Council's risk management arrangements.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Members of the Corporate Leadership Team and the Head of Audit have all been consulted on the Council's governance arrangements for 2022-23, the views gathered have been included in the statement.
- 6.2 As part of this year's review the Director of Strategy, Insight and Governance met with members of the Corporate Leadership Team to complete a Commitment Statement for their directorate. The feedback gathered has been included in the statement.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Following the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee's approval the statement will be signed by the Leader and included in the final statement of accounts and published on the Council's website.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None