

Report to: Audit & Governance Committee Meeting  
1 February 2023

Director or Business Manager Lead: Sanjiv Kohli Deputy Chief Executive/Director  
Resources, Section 151 Officer  
Sue Bearman, Assistant Director Legal & Democratic  
Services, Monitoring Officer

Lead Officer: Nick Wilson, Business Manager Financial Services  
01636 655317

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Report Title</b>	Review of Significant Issues in the Annual Governance Statement
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To update members of the Audit & Accounts Committee on the significant governance issues identified in the Annual Governance Statement.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the Committee notes the results of the review of significant governance issues as identified in the Annual Governance Statement.
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	To provide assurance for Members that identified issues are being managed appropriately and that any necessary improvements are implemented.  To ensure the Council meets its Community Plan objective to be professional and trustworthy by delivering on promises; providing good quality and demonstrating integrity.

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and with proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and that it is used economically, efficiently and effectively. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations the Council conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and prepares an Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Audit & Accounts Committee on 23 November 2022, Members approved the Annual Governance Statement for the Council for financial year ended 31 March 2022; part of the Council's Statement of Accounts. To ensure that Members

are able to undertake their assurance role, this report updates the Committee on the status of the governance issues identified within it.

1.3 The governance actions identified were as follows: -

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Completion of the outstanding item from the FM Code of Practice	Development of Asset Management Strategy to supplement the Capital Strategy	Business Manager – Corporate Property	July 2022
Whistleblowing and Gifts & Hospitality policies are outside their review timetable	The two policies mentioned were due for review prior to the pandemic. As officer resource was redirected during the pandemic, these were not updated. These will be reviewed and updated during the course of this financial year	Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services	March 2023

1.4 The significant governance issues identified were as follows: -

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Change in the system of Governance During May 2022 the Council has changed its system of Governance to an Executive (Cabinet) arrangements. During this year there may be occasions whether the system is not	The Member Working Group who were tasked within formulating the detail of how the new governance arrangements should operate will be reconvened and continue to meet as necessary in order to review the effectiveness	Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services	November 2022

working effectively.	of the new arrangements. A report will be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee to review the new arrangements		
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## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 The Council’s Cabinet adopted a Corporate Asset Management Strategy on 12 July 2022. The Strategy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in legislation, policy and best practice; ensuring the Council’s land and property assets fully support the Council’s Community Plan.
- 2.2 Reports regarding the Council’s Whistleblowing and Gifts & Hospitality policies are on the agenda for this meeting.
- 2.3 The Member Working Group who were tasked within formulating the detail of how the new governance arrangements are operating has now met twice, and a review of the operation of the Council’s revised governance arrangements is a separate item on the agenda for this meeting also.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

The Annual Governance Statement is published on [page 138](#) of the Council’s Statement of Accounts for 2021/2.

The Audit & Governance Committee report 23 November 2022 Approval of the Statement of Accounts is published – [item 10](#)

The Cabinet report 12 July 2022 Corporate Asset Management Strategy is published – [item 15](#)