

This report is public	
Annual Governance Statement 2023-24	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	29 May 2024
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	TBC
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	N/A
Report of	Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Shiraz Sheikh

Purpose of report

The report sets out the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the Council for 2023-24 for approval. The AGS summarises the key governance issues for the Council and the actions required to address these. The AGS is required to be approved by those charged with governance, the Accounts Audit & Risk Committee, under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

1. Recommendations

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023-24.
- 1.2 To authorise the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of Cherwell District Council.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and explains how the necessary assurance to support the AGS has been obtained. This should enable the Committee to make an informed judgement as to the effectiveness of the process that the Council has followed in conducting the annual review of the system of internal control within the Council.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	The are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Joanne Kaye, Head of Finance, 20 May 2024

Legal	Completion and approval of the AGS is required by Regulation 6(1) (b) of the Accounts and Audit England Regulations 2015. Within the Regulations, and in accordance with defined 'proper practice', there is a mandatory requirement to publish an AGS. The AGS, attached, if approved and signed will form part of the Statement of Accounts. Failure to comply would result in the Council not meeting its statutory requirements. Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, 19 May 2024			
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. However, as per paragraph 1 in section 5 the approval of this report will avoid the risk of not being compliant with Accents and Audit Regulations 2015. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 20 May 2024			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				Not applicable
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Climate & Environmental Impact		x		Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact		x		Not applicable
Data Impact		x		Not applicable
Procurement & subsidy		x		Not applicable
Council Priorities	Not applicable			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Corporate Leadership Team			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 Every year the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee receives the annual governance statement. The statement is required under the account and audit regs and is published with the council's accounts.

4. Details

- 4.1 The Council's AGS for 2023-24 is attached at Appendix 1. It outlines for the Council:
- The scope of governance responsibilities.
 - The purpose of the governance framework.
 - A description of the governance framework against the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for "Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities".
 - Arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework.
 - Governance issues that need to be addressed.
- 4.2 The preparation of the Statement has built on previously established arrangements, which involves the collating of information from a number of sources, both internal and external. The information is analysed, and a draft Statement is produced, discussed with key officers, and any amendments identified are then made.
- 4.3 To support the Annual Governance review, assistant directors are required to complete an assurance statement in relation to systems and processes operational within their areas during the year. These are signed off by CLT. The Statements demonstrate that Directorates have evaluated and assessed their internal control environment.
- 4.4 The Council receives a substantial amount of assurance from the work that is undertaken by its Internal Audit Service and its External Auditors. The role of Internal Audit is to provide independent assurance that the Council's risk management, governance and internal control processes are operating effectively. The role of External Audit is to review the financial statements, obtain evidence that they are materially correct and provide an opinion as to whether these represent a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council. In addition, External Audit provide a value for money opinion assessing whether proper arrangements are in place for securing financial resilience and challenging how the Council secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 4.5 One of the assurance statements the Council receives is the annual opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor in respect of the control framework. The opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor in respect of audit work completed in 2023/24 gave satisfactory assurance on the internal control environment and the arrangements for governance, risk management and control.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to agree the Annual Governance Statement. This is not recommended as the Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement as set out in the Accents and Audit Regulations 2015.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement and for it to be approved by those charged with governance, the Accounts Audit & Risk Committee.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A
If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	All

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Annual Governance Statement 2023/24
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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