

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON 30 JULY 2020

PART A : REPORT

SUBJECT: Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 and Code of Corporate Governance 2020/21

REPORT AUTHOR: Stephen Pearse, Internal Audit Manager

DATE: July 2020

EXTN: 37561

PORTFOLIO AREA: Corporate Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

To present the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 for the Committee's approval, supported by the local Code of Corporate Governance

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members of the Audit & Governance Committee are requested to:-

- approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Council is required by the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015 to produce and approve an Annual Governance Statement, to accompany the annual accounting statements.

The revised Regulations require that the Annual Accounts (from 2017/18-on) are completed and signed / dated by the responsible financial officer by 31st May, with formal approval of the audited Annual Accounts, by the Council or its designated body (in this case, the Audit & Governance Committee), by 31st July. *(NB – in light of the Covid-19 crisis, these dates have been relaxed for 2020 to 31st August and 30th November respectively).*

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is based upon CIPFA best practice to meet the requirements of the Regulations. As reported to the Committee in previous years, CIPFA issued its new Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework and associated Guidance Note in 2016 and this Framework now forms the basis for AGS reporting and for the Council's local Code of Corporate Governance.

The AGS document has been prepared for, and considered by, the Council's Governance & Risk Group (made up of representatives from Service areas and Finance, including Internal Audit and the Risk Manager). It is based upon the Council's local Code of Corporate Governance and other supporting documentation, including the Council's Strategic Risk Register and the annual audit opinion provided by the Internal Audit Manager.

In preparing the current document previously agreed wording has been used from the last AGS and additional wording / updates have been applied to reflect relevant changes and progress made by the Council in 2019/20. Sections where changes have been made are highlighted (shaded) in the document. It is primarily a backward-looking document over the period of the accounts, but some high-level wording has been included in respect of the 2020 Covid-19 crisis.

The Annual Governance Statement is provided for the Committee's approval. (The document is also signed by the Chief Executive Officer and the Leader of the Council and the final version will accompany the Annual Accounts of the Council which will be reviewed and approved on 30th July).

No change to the local Code of Corporate Governance is proposed.

1.2 POINTS TO NOTE

As it has been difficult to fully align meetings of the Committee with the revised accounting timescales, the draft version of the document has not been presented to the Committee before 31st May, but the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee was provided with a copy to allow any immediate comment.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

It is proposed that the Committee approves the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20

3. OPTIONS:

To approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20, or not

4. CONSULTATION:

In preparing the AGS, input was requested from the management of various service areas and the document was considered and agreed by the Council's Governance & Risk Group

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		✓

Legal		✓
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

6. IMPLICATIONS:

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

The Committee approves the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A