

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board

DATE: 24 February 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Annual Governance Statement - 2018/19

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement was previously presented to the Board on 24 July 2019. A report providing an update on the latest position regarding the external audit of the Council's 2018/19 Statement of Accounts was also presented at the same meeting. The report explained that, due to a technical accounting issue, the External Auditor was unable to publish an audit certificate or opinion by 31 July 2019.

There is a statutory requirement that the Annual Governance Statement reports on the governance framework that has been in place within the Council up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

The delays in completing the audit of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts therefore necessitate that the 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement be updated to reflect developments since the Board originally approved the document.

The purpose of this report is therefore to submit the revised 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement to the Board for review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

The Board is requested to review the revised 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement and to recommend its adoption by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The revised 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement is attached as an appendix to this report. The Action Plan relating to the governance issues for 2019/20 has been updated to reflect developments since 24 July 2019. The remainder of the document remains unchanged from the version previously approved.

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Local authorities have a legal responsibility to conduct, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of their governance framework including their system of internal control (Regulation 4(3) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015). Following the review an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) must be produced, approved and published.

4.2 The powers and duties of the Business Efficiency Board include responsibility for considering the Council's corporate governance arrangements and agreeing necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice. The AGS provides a commitment to address the governance challenges identified by the Council.

4.3 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although the AGS makes reference to the key financial challenges faced by the Council.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Good governance leads to good management, good performance and good stewardship of public money. It therefore enables the Council to implement its vision in accordance with its values and to engage effectively with its citizens and service users and ensure good outcomes for them.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

See 5.1 above

5.3 A Healthy Halton

See 5.1 above

5.4 A Safer Halton

See 5.1 above

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

See 5.1 above

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The AGS provides assurance that the Council has a sound system of risk management, control and governance. The document provides a public statement of how the Council directs and controls its functions and relates to its community.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The Council has to have regard to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment and the promotion of equality under the Equalities Act 2010 and related statutes. Proper governance arrangements will ensure that equality and diversity issues are appropriately addressed.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact
CIPFA / SOLACE – Delivering good governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)	Kingsway House, Widnes	Merv Murphy
CIPFA / SOLACE - Delivering good governance in Local Government: Guidance note for English authorities (2016)		