



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Audit and Governance Committee  
28 May 2024

Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]

Ward(s) Affected: All

**Annual Governance Statements 2023/24**

**Report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability and Resources**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 To review and agree the Annual Governance Statements for 2023/24

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Joint Audit & Governance Committee is asked to:

- (a) note the evidence of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and the Progress Report produced to deal with any issues arising from these requirements as set out in Appendix A.
- (b) approve the Annual Governance Statements for each Council as set out in Appendix B and C to this report

## 1. Context

- 3.1 Corporate governance is the responsibility of all of us and can be defined as:

*“How local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.” - CIPFA/SOLACE*

- 3.2 In late 2007 CIPFA/SOLACE published a framework and guidance on delivering good governance in local government. This framework was updated with revised principles in 2016 when CIPFA/SOLACE published the document *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework CIPFA/SOLACE*) Review of Annual Governance Statements which contains guidance on delivering good governance in local government updating the 2007 document.

- 3.3 The following are the six core principles in relation to local government as set out in the revised framework:

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law;
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits;
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
- Developing the Council’s capability, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Implementing good practices in transparency reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

- 3.4 For governance to be effective it must be seen both as a collective responsibility and a cultural norm, as well as having clear lines of accountability. One of the main outcomes of the new corporate leadership team design and implementation is to make sure that each area where

there is a need for clear accountability and 'grip' is assigned to a member of the Corporate Leadership team.

- 3.5 Both the 2007 and 2016 framework requires the production of a Code of Corporate Governance. This was agreed by the former Constitution and Audit Committee in Adur and the former Governance and Audit Committee in Worthing and approved by both Councils in July 2008. The latest version was adopted by each Council in October 2022. It is reviewed periodically and .
- 3.6 The revision to the framework is designed to help local government take responsibility for developing and shaping an informed approach to governance, aimed at achieving the highest standards in a measured and proportionate way. The Framework is intended to assist authorities individually in reviewing and accounting for their own unique approach. The overall aim is to ensure that:
- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities
  - there is sound and inclusive decision making
  - there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.
- 3.7 The Annual Governance Statement is a comment on the totality of good corporate governance, and it is a statutory requirement for this statement to be published annually. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required the publication of the Annual Governance Statement, following consideration of the Statement of Internal Control. The Council's Head of Internal Audit (from Mazars) will provide a written annual report to those charged with governance timed to support the annual governance statement. The Annual Governance Statement must be approved before the Statement of Accounts is approved.
- 3.8 The CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2023/24 is prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), which have been adopted as the basis for public sector accounting in the UK. The 2023/24 Code has been developed by CIPFA/LASAAC and has effect for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2023. The Code suggests that it is best practice to have the Annual Governance Statement published with the Statement of Accounts.

## 2. Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

- 4.1 These are key corporate documents and the most senior member and the most senior officer (Leader and Chief Executive) have joint responsibility as signatories for its content. The Leader of each Council and the Chief Executive as signatories of the respective Annual Governance Statements need to ensure that they accurately reflect the governance framework for which they are responsible. The guidance advises that it should be owned by all senior officers and members of the authority and that it is essential that there is a commitment to good governance at the heart of the organisation.
- 4.2 In order to achieve this they are likely to rely on many sources of assurance, such as:
- directors and managers;
  - the responsible financial officer;
  - the monitoring officer;
  - members;
  - the head of internal audit;.
  - third parties, e.g. partnerships;
  - external audit and other review agencies
- 4.3 Guidance to preparing the Annual Governance Statement shows “the need for a review body in the process, such as an audit committee or scrutiny role who should be charged with critically reviewing the AGS and its supporting documentation”. The constitution indicates that this function should be dealt with by this Committee, and this scrutiny will meet the requirements for a critical review of the Annual Governance Statement.
- 4.4 There is no definitive way of producing the Annual Governance Statement. Professional guidance indicates that at the centre of the review process should be a corporate group who will be given ultimate responsibility for drafting the statement, evaluating assurances and the supporting evidence. This group should review whether or not there is consistency with existing policies and the authorities’ governance framework.
- 4.5 An officer reference group is responsible for ensuring that the Annual Governance Statements accurately reflect the governance arrangements of the two Councils. The membership of the group comprises of:

- Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (Corporate sponsor)
- Monitoring Officer
- Section 151 Officer
- Assistant Director (People and Change)
- Democratic Services Officers
- Head of Technology
- Security and Risk Officer
- Head of Internal Audit

4.6 A reference group of Councillors is used to give feedback on the preparation of the draft statement:

- the Leader of both Councils
- the Executive Member for Resources
- the Chair of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- the Chair and Members of the Joint Audit and Governance Committee
- the Leaders of the main opposition party in each Council

4.7 As part of the review process, each of the Councillors referred to in paragraph 4.6 above were written to in May 2024 seeking feedback on issues which may have a bearing on the completion of the review of the Annual Governance Statement. Any responses received as part of the 2024 review process have been incorporated into the proposed statements.

4.8 The Officer's Governance Group has reviewed the current framework and action plan on issues required to improve or strengthen the Council's Governance Framework. The outcome of the review is shown in the attached Governance Action Plan Progress Report as set out in the attached Appendix B. The traffic light system of reporting has been used to identify progress on dealing with the actions, and identifying any new action to take forward.

4.9 Following the identification of issues within the Housing Service over the last few years by both the Director for Housing and Communities and Internal Audit, the Council referred itself to the Regulator of Social Housing (the Regulator). A housing improvement plan has been developed which

addresses the issues raised and builds on the earlier work. The work undertaken to date has highlighted a number of issues requiring disclosure in the Annual Governance Report. Work to address these issues are on-going, and we expect to be able to remove this item once the improvement programme has been completed and we are no longer under review by the Regulator. In the meantime, regular reports on the referral are taken to the Joint Audit & Governance Committee.

- 4.10 As has been reported on via quarterly monitoring reports the councils have faced a difficult financial situation over the course of the year as as a result additional internal financial controls have been in place which have been focused on reducing avoidable spend. These involved a daily review of all spending as well as a weekly decision group made up of members of CLT and finance. These have been successful and will continue into the 24/25 financial year.
- 4.11 As part of the organisational design, in line with recognised best practice, the 'golden triangle' of the three statutory officers; head of paid service, section 151 officer and Monitoring Officer now meet on a regular basis and are now a necessary part of the sign off process for all Major projects. Further work is being done in internal governance as part of the organisational design work and will be reported on in the committed JSC reports on the programme.

### **3. Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24**

- 5.1 Each year the Head of Internal Audit (from Mazars who provide the Councils Internal Audit Service) produces an Internal Audit Annual Report which summarises the work that Internal Audit has undertaken during the previous financial year and the control environment key themes which have been identified across the authority. The purpose of this report is to provide an annual assurance statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's systems of governance, risk management and internal control. A report is produced separately for Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council.
- 5.2 The 2023/24 the Head of Internal Audit's Annual report is currently provided in draft separately on this committee agenda. The audit opinion is not included as there are still a number of reports to be finalised. The internal audit representative from Mazars will provide a verbal update at the meeting.

- 5.3 The following are extracts from the Head of Internal Audit's (Mazars) Draft Internal Audit Annual Report.

There have been 11 audits completed in 2023/24 to date, 7 have been given moderate assurance and 4 limited assurance. None have unsatisfactory assurance opinions. The total number of recommendations made to date is 62, 37% priority 2 and 63% priority 3, no recommendations have been classified as priority 1. Nine audits have yet to be finalised and these numbers will therefore be updated in the final report.

#### **4. Engagement and Communication**

- 6.1 Officers and members are consulted on the production of the Annual Governance Statement as outlined in section 4 above.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct costs or other financial implications involved with the production of these statements.
- 7.2 The Assistant Director for Finance in her role as the Council's S.151 Officer (Chief Financial Officer) has been closely involved in the preparation, review and publication of the Action Plan and the draft Annual Governance Statement.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Paragraph 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 sets out the legal requirements for each authority to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The Annual Governance Statement is a comment on the totality of good corporate governance, and it is a requirement for this statement to be published alongside the statutory annual statement of accounts. The draft Annual Governance Statement for Adur District Council is attached to this report as Appendix B, and for Worthing at Appendix C.
- 8.3 The Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services in her role as the Councils' Monitoring Officer has been involved in the preparation, review and publication of the Action Plan and the draft Annual Governance Statement.

- 8.4 Part 3 of each Council's constitutions set out the terms of reference for the Joint Audit and Governance Committee which includes their responsibilities in respect of Audit activity.

**Background Papers:**

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework & Guidance  
Notes for English Authorities; CIPFA/SOLACE 2016

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

The role of the Chief Financial Officer in public service organisations - CIPFA

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **3. Environmental**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

### **4. Governance**

The report contains an annual review and assessment of the Councils' governance arrangements.

**A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law**

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Status
A1/01	Behaving with integrity	Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	<p>The Councils each have an up to date Code of Conduct for Members and an Officers Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct is reviewed regularly; the latest review of the Members Code of Conduct took place as part of a full constitutional review and was approved at both Adur and Worthing Full Councils in October 2022 and again in March 2024.</p>	Progressing well (Green)
A1/02	Behaving with integrity	Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values of the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).	Monitoring Officer/ Assistant Director (People and Change)	Ongoing	<p>The code of conduct approved by members underpins the standards of behaviour expected from officers and members and the Nolan Principles</p> <p>There is also an approved Officer/Member relationship protocol which sets out expected conduct for Officers and Members carrying out their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Training is also given on Member/officer conduct and behaviours; and at discussions during one to one meetings to all leaders within the organisation.</p>	Progressing well (Green)

## Appendix A

### A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Status
A1/04	Behaving with integrity	Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.	Monitoring Officer/ S151 Officer / Assistant Director (People and Change)	Ongoing	<p>The Council has up to date registers of interests, gifts and hospitality.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Protocol is detailed in the Councils' constitutions and was reviewed in March 2022. It is to be reviewed every three years.</p> <p>Both Council's Constitutions contain several codes and protocols for the management of good governance at Part 5.</p>	Progressing well (Green)
A2/03	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.	Monitoring Office/ Head of Procurement	January 2024	<p>The new procurement strategy was considered and approved by members in January 2021 will be next reviewed before October 2024.</p> <p>The Councils' Contract Procedure Rules were reviewed and updated as part of the Constitutional update in October 2022. Work will be progressed to update the Contract Procedure Rules when the Procurement Act 2023 comes into force in October 2024</p>	Progressing well (Green)

## Appendix A

### A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
A2/04	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Statement of business ethics communicates commitment to ethical values to external suppliers	Monitoring Office/ Head of Procurement	Completed	<p>A sustainability procurement strategy was approved by the Councils' in January 2021 commitments to responsible procurement and social value.</p> <p>The Councils Contract Procedure Rules were reviewed and updated as part of the Constitutional update in October 2022, and are under review pending the Procurement Act 2023 coming into force in October 2024.</p>	Progressing well (Green)
A3/02	Respecting the rule of law	Creating conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements	CEO and Head of Paid Service	Ongoing	<p>The CFO is now a member of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). The only issue that the Councils now do not comply with in the recommended guidance on the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government is that the CFO should report to the CEO and be of the same grade as the Directors. The Councils comply with all other aspects of the recommended practice.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer is also a member of the CLT group.</p>	Being closely monitored (Amber)

					<p>The Head of Paid Service, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer now meet regularly to discuss their statutory roles, governance and issues arising and have reviewed the recently issued draft Code of Practice on Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers issued by CIPFA Solace and LLG</p>
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## Appendix A

### B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
B1/01	Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	Openness	S151 Officer / Joel Goacher	Ongoing annually by 31st May each year	<p>Within the new framework there is a requirement for an Annual Report.</p> <p>The Council has developed the 'narrative report' contained within the Statement of Accounts to meet the key requirements of an Annual Report. This is refreshed annually</p>	Progressing well (Green)
B1/01	Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.	Tina Favier	Ongoing	<p>The Council's plan 'Our Plan' outlines how the Councils approach to engaging with our stakeholders.</p> <p>The Council publishes all decisions in a transparent manner, as part of our decision making key stakeholders are consulted with prior to decisions being made</p> <p>With respect to our formal partnerships, these are governed by agreements which clearly detail our governance arrangements and the expected outcomes from the partnership.</p> <p>The Council will engage with a range of key stakeholders informally to support policy making.</p>	Progressing well (Green)



## Appendix A

### B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status	
B1/01		Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders (continued)					
		Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainable	Assistant Director (People and Change)	Ongoing review	<p>The Councils have an overarching communications strategy which sets out how we will seek to engage with the community and other stakeholders in an open and transparent way using traditional and digital tools.</p> <p>We have a communications calendar aligned to both Councils priorities which is reviewed quarterly by CLT, and with a consistent process of review and sign off of internal and external communications. This is accompanied by core narratives on key strategies and programmes.</p> <p>We have agreed an internal communications programme in Q1 2024/25 and associated calendar for 2024/25 which is now aligned to Our Plan's principles and missions, with focused campaigns on these.</p> <p>We have developed a participation programme for 2024/25 to support community engagement and have developed a participation matrix that will</p>	Being closely monitored (Amber)	



				<p>be launched in Q2 2024/25 bring together officers in key roles to work &amp; learn together in a coordinated way to support engagement across the organisation. This is supported by a Learning Lab to be launched in Q2 2024/25 that will support applied learning &amp; development to increase and improve the skills of people to work in more participative ways from novice to experienced practitioner.</p>	
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## Appendix A

### C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
C1 /01	Defining outcomes	Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions	Catherine Howe / CLT	Ongoing	<p>A vision has been produced and agreed by the Councils called 'Our Plan'. The Council receives 6 months reports on progress in implementing the actions arising from these priorities.</p> <p>Under the Constitution the Cabinet is required to submit annually to the Council a corporate plan and annual report and to monitor its effectiveness.</p> <p>Services will undertake additional performance management as part of the broader service planning process.</p>	Progressing well (Green)

## Appendix A

### E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
E1/02	Developing the entity's capacity	Improving resource use through the appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.	Assistant Director (People and Change)	Ongoing	<p>Corporate performance indicators have been developed and tracked across our foundational services and missions.</p> <p>Work is being developed to better align and prioritise political priorities, programmes, services &amp; areas of focus within the Organisational Design to Our Plan's missions to ensure the organisation can be ambitious and sustainable in delivering outcomes for residents.</p> <p>VFM opinion audit judgement reviewed on an annual basis and the opinion is positive.</p> <p>A number of services are regionally benchmarked and others nationally e.g. Adur Homes, Fraud, Leisure. Cost comparisons with other Councils undertaken.</p> <p>VFM is measured as part of procurement.</p>	Progressing well(Green)

Appendix A

**E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
E1/04	Developing the entity's capacity	Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance strategic allocation of resources	Assistant Director (People and Change)	31st December 2024	<p>A skills &amp; competency framework that translates our values into behaviours &amp; competencies for different levels of staff is being developed and tested to be launched in Q2 2024/25, accompanied by a workforce skills audit.</p> <p>Work will be done in Q3 2024/25 to develop an employee value proposition that shows how we will improve the different building blocks to attract and develop staff</p> <p>Work will be developed in Q3 2023/25 to work with partners to map future skills needs and attract funding for joint L&amp;D.</p> <p>See E2/09 for further detail on learning &amp; development and performance management.</p>	Progressing well(Green)

## Appendix A

### E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
E2/02	Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	<p>Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme of delegations is updated at least annually in the light of legal and organisational changes.</li> <li>• Officer Decision Protocol is regularly reviewed</li> <li>• Executive Procedure Rules are regularly reviewed</li> </ul>	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	<p>The Scheme of Delegations, Officer Decision Making Protocol and Executive Procedure Rules are regularly reviewed</p> <p>There is an ongoing review of constitutional updates and amendments. The Scheme of Delegations has been updated to reflect the current leadership team roles. The Monitoring Officer will regularly report to the Joint Audit &amp; Governance Committee on any proposed constitutional amendments or amendments that have been made under the Monitoring Officer's delegation to make minor and inconsequential amendments. There is also a published Register of Sub-delegations online, this has also been updated to reflect the current leadership team roles.</p>	Progressing well(Green)

	<p>- Contract standing orders are reviewed regularly</p>	<p>S151 Officer/ Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Contract Standing Orders have been updated and approved by both Councils in April 2022.</p> <p>Training continues to be rolled out to all officers involved in procuring items of £5k or more.</p> <p>A toolkit has been rolled out to assist managers in complying with the Contract Standing Orders.</p> <p>A programme of contract management training is in place.</p> <p>A further review will be required later in the year to ensure continuous compliance with the Procurement Act 2023</p>	<p>Progressing well (Green)</p>
	<p>- To review and refresh the financial regulations.</p>	<p>S151 Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>A new revised set of financial regulations was approved by the Councils in April 2019 and again as part of the Council's constitutional review in October 2022. This will be reviewed again in 2023 and amended if needed.</p>	<p>Progressing well (Green)</p>

## Appendix A

### E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
E2/04	Developing the capability of the Councils leadership and other individuals	Ensuring members have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	<p>A revised development programme is due to be implemented for 2023/24. The programme is intended to deliver targeted development sessions for newly Elected Members and provide refresher sessions for existing Members.</p> <p>The development programme will include topics such as chairing meetings, decision making, code of conduct, GDPR, planning, licensing, safeguarding, housing, casework, local government finance, google suite, social media and developing Adur &amp; Worthing.</p> <p>This can be evidenced via individual Councillor records which are kept up-to-date with training attendance data and are available for inspection.</p> <p>The new development programme is available on request.</p>	Progressing well (Green)

Appendix A

**E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
E2/04	Developing the capability of the Councils leadership and other individuals	<p>Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.</p> <p>- Reviewing individual member performance on a regular basis taking account of their attendance and considering any training or development needs.</p>	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	<p>There is no formal process for carrying out development reviews for Members.</p> <p>However, Democratic Services does ensure that Planning, Licensing and Scrutiny training is kept up to date which ensures that performance in the determination of quasi-judicial matters is maintained at a high level.</p> <p>The development programme for members is reviewed annually and amended accordingly to needs identified in the previous year.</p>	<p>Being closely monitored</p> <p>(Amber)</p>



## Appendix A

### E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
E2/04	Developing the capability of the Councils leadership and other individuals	Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews (as part of 1:1 conversations between manager and staff) which take account of training or development needs	Assistant Director (People and Change)	Ongoing	<p>- An updated annualised learning &amp; development programme has been agreed in Q1 2024/25 that enables staff to learn &amp; apply skills to deliver Our Plan's principles &amp; missions and aligned to the Organisational Design.</p> <p>- This being accompanied by targeted L&amp;D on key capabilities needed to help the organisation adapt to future change, as well as for managers specifically, including an annual Organisational Leadership Team programme and a Participation Learning Lab to launch in Q2 2024/25. Improved guidance and templates on 121s has been developed and promoted in Q1 2024/25.</p> <p>- This will be accompanied by a personal development framework that enables people to improve their performance and managers to support and manage performance.</p> <p>- A pipeline of workforce policy reviews for 2024/25 has been developed with the first quarter of reviews going to the Joint Staff Committee in March 2024.</p> <p>- A staff survey has been carried out in Q1 2024/25, and further to data analysis and workshops to get under the skin of the survey findings, an improvement plan to tackle the issues will be developed at an organisational and directorate level in Q2 2024/25</p>	Progressing well (Green)

## Appendix A

### F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
F2/02	Managing Performance	Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.	Monitoring Officer / Policy Officer	Ongoing	<p>Corporate performance indicators have been developed and tracked across our foundational services and missions.</p> <p>Work is being developed to better align and prioritise political priorities, programmes, services &amp; areas of focus within the Organisational Design to Our Plan's missions to ensure the organisation can be ambitious and sustainable in delivering outcomes for residents.</p> <p>A structured approach to designing new services and operating models has been developed to ensure that redesign of services are carried out in a way that focuses on outcomes for residents, helps services adapt to change and is financially resilient.</p> <p>Governance is being developed to track the progress of the delivery of the service redesigns and missions via new Missions Board and a Major Programmes Board.</p>	Progressing well (Green)

## Appendix A

### F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
F2/03		Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during, and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance.	Monitoring Officer / Scrutiny Officer	Annual / Ongoing	<p>Annual report on scrutiny produced providing evidence of improvements of changes resulting from the work of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>An annual report for the work of JOSC is next due to be considered by the committee on the 8th June 2024.</p> <p>A review of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny process is currently taking place. Officers are working with the Members of JOSC on this and Member workshops are to be held prior to the June meeting to review the effectiveness of Scrutiny. The findings from which will be reported to JOSC in June 2024 and further work will be considered to review and improve JOSC later in 2024.</p>	Progressing well (Green)

## Appendix A

### F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
F2/05	Managing Performance	<p>Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages And post implementation reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good procurement and contract management arrangements are in place</li> </ul>	S151 Officer / Head of Procurement	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Contract Standing Orders have been reviewed and a new training programme continues to be rolled out.</li> <li>- A procurement toolkit has been developed to help staff purchase wisely.</li> <li>- Guidance on supplier management is being developed .</li> <li>- Contract management training programme is in place.</li> </ul>	Progressing well (Green)
F3/05	Robust Internal control	<p>Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provides a Further source of effective Assurance regarding Arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment.</li> </ul>	S151 Officer	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective audit scrutiny is in place. Councillors can attend training. A programme is in place to develop the knowledge and skills of the Councillors.</li> <li>- A review of the effectiveness of the Audit Committee was last considered by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee in June 2019. This is due to be refreshed in 2023.</li> </ul>	Progressing well (Green)

**F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
F3/05	Robust Internal control	- that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon	S151 Officer / Head of Internal Audit	Ongoing	<p>Head of Internal Audit reports to the Corporate Leadership Team regularly to raise the profile of issues.</p> <p>An App is used to track progress in addressing agreed audit recommendations. This is being used by Council officers to provide updates and is used by Audit to review actions and report progress to JAGC.</p> <p>Heads of Service are now being asked to attend JAGC where responses to audit queries are not being provided or where No/Limited assurance reports are issued.</p>	Progressing well (Green)
F4/01	Managing data	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data	Head of Technology	Ongoing	<p>This work is overseen by the Senior Information Governance Officer.</p> <p>A suite of Digital Policies, procedures, training &amp; guidance is in place and is continuously reviewed. Progress and performance are monitored by the Senior Information Risk Owner.</p> <p>Compliance is regularly audited by internal audit.</p>	Being closely monitored (Amber)

**F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
F4/02	Managing data	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.	Head of Technology	Ongoing	Data sharing protocols are in place when sharing data with other bodies.  All services have Privacy Notices in place at the point of data collection which are reviewed by the GDPR leads and supported by the Data Protection Officer.	Progressing well (Green)

**G. Implementing good practices in transparency reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability**

Action Code	Title	Description	Assigned To	Due Date	Latest Note	Performance Status
G2/02	Implementing good practices in reporting	Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its assets	S151 Officer / Scrutiny Officer	Ongoing	<p>A formal annual report is now required. This should include key points raised by scrutineers and service users' feedback on service delivery .</p> <p>Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee's annual report for 2022/23 is due to be approved at Council in July 2023.</p> <p>This requirement was introduced in 2016/17. The narrative report which is published within the Statement has been developed to meet the requirements of an annual report.</p>	Progressing well (Green)

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**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

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***SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY***

Adur District Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016 (the Framework). The Framework expects that local authorities will put in place proper arrangements for the governance of their affairs and which facilitate the effective exercise of functions and ensures that the responsibilities set out above are met.

At least once a year, Local Authorities are statutorily required to review their governance arrangements. The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the Framework fulfils this requirement.

A copy of the code is on our website at [www.adur.gov.uk](http://www.adur.gov.uk) or [www.adur-worthing.gov.uk](http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk) or can be obtained from the Council. This statement explains how Adur District Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

***THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

***THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements are summarised below:



## Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework

### Council, Executive and Leader

- Provides leadership and develops the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcome for residents and service users.
- Develops the vision into objectives for the Council and its partnerships

### Decision making

- All decisions are made in the open
- Decisions are recorded on the Council website
- The scheme of delegations which details the decision making arrangements is regularly updated
- The Monitoring Officer ensures that all decisions made comply with relevant laws and regulations

### Risk Management

- Risk registers identify both operational and strategic risks
- Key risks and opportunities are considered by the Corporate Leadership Team every quarter
- Risks and opportunities are reported to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee every quarter and inform the work of the internal audit team

### Scrutiny and Review

- The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews Council policy and can challenge the decisions made.
- The Joint Audit and Governance Committee undertakes all of the core functions of an audit committee.
- The Joint Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for review and approving the Council's Governance arrangements and undertakes the role of a Standards Committee ensuring that members comply with the Code of Conduct

### Corporate Leadership Team

- The Council's Corporate Leadership Team comprises of the Chief Executive, the three Directors, Assistant Directors and the Head of Technology and Design who are responsible for the delivery of the Council's aims and objectives
- The head of paid service is the Chief Executive who is responsible for all Council Staff and leading an effective Corporate Leadership Team.
- CLT seeks advice from the Council's Chief Financial Officer (Assistant Director Finance) who is responsible for safeguarding the Council's financial position
- CLT seeks advice from the Monitoring Officer who is the Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services. They are responsible for ensuring legality and promoting high standards of public conduct.

The operation of this authority's governance framework is described in the sections below. This sets out how the Council has complied with the seven principles set out in the Framework during 2023/24.

## **THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

The governance framework gives the Members and the Organisation the confidence and certainty that what needs to be done is being done. The chart below provides a high level overview of the Council's key responsibilities, how they are met and the means by which assurance is delivered.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO	HOW WE DO IT
<p><b>Principle A</b> Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Constitution</li> <li>● The Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services)</li> <li>● Section 151 Officer (Assistant Director Finance)</li> <li>● Codes of conduct</li> <li>● Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>● Bribery Act 2010 policy guidance</li> <li>● Corporate anti-fraud work</li> <li>● Procurement Strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle B</b> Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultations</li> <li>● Terms of reference for partnerships</li> <li>● Freedom of information requests</li> <li>● Complaints procedure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle C</b> Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organisational goals</li> <li>● Service planning</li> <li>● Performance Management</li> <li>● Community Strategy</li> <li>● Procurement Strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle D</b> Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Service planning</li> <li>● Performance Management</li> <li>● Options appraisals</li> <li>● Whole life costing</li> <li>● Equalities Impact Assessments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle E</b> Developing the Council's capability, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Robust interview and selection process</li> <li>● Training and development</li> <li>● Workforce planning</li> <li>● Succession planning</li> <li>● Performance development reviews</li> <li>● Talent management</li> <li>● HR Policies &amp; procedures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle F</b> Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Effective member scrutiny function</li> <li>● Financial management and MTFP</li> <li>● Corporate risk register</li> <li>● Annual audit plan</li> <li>● Information Security policies</li> <li>● Compliance with the requirements of the Public Service Network (PSN)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle G</b> Implementing good practices in transparency reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reports are held on the website</li> <li>● Annual audited financial statements are publically available</li> <li>● Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>● Effective Internal Audit Service</li> </ul>

**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**HOW WE KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IS BEING DONE**

Joint Audit and Governance Committee function and self-assessment; Corporate Governance Group; Scrutiny Reviews; Review of progress made in addressing issues; Performance monitoring; Review of compliance with corporate governance controls; Review of accounts; Employee opinion surveys; Internal audits and external audits; Inspections and recommendations made by external agencies.

The following sections look at how the Council delivers governance principles in more detail:

**A. BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY, DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES, AND RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW**

***The Constitution***

The constitution sets out how the Council operates; the roles and responsibilities of members, officers and the scrutiny and review functions; how decisions are made; and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Although there is no longer a statutory requirement, this Council continues with this arrangement internally; and regularly reviews and updates the constitution to ensure it reflects current practice. As well as working together as a single organisation and with our neighbour Worthing borough Council, members and officers continue to improve their working relations with other organisations, both locally and sub-nationally, to achieve a common purpose of improved efficiency and effectiveness.

***The Monitoring Officer***

The Monitoring Officer is a statutory function and ensures that the Council, its officers, and its elected members, maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do. The Monitoring Officer ensures that the Council is compliant with laws and regulations, as well as internal policies and procedures. She is also responsible for matters relating to the conduct of Councillors and Officers, and for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Council's Constitution. In our Councils this officer is Joanne Lee who is also the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

***Section 151 Officer***

Whilst all Council Members and Officers have a general financial responsibility, the s151 of the Local Government Act 1972 specifies that one Officer in particular must be responsible for the financial administration of the organisation and that this Officer must be CCAB qualified. This is typically the highest ranking qualified finance officer and in this Council this is Emma Thomas, who is also the Assistant Director Finance.

# ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

### **A. BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY, DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES, AND RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW**

#### ***Codes of Conduct***

Codes of Conduct exist for both staff and members.

All Councillors have to keep to a Code of Conduct to ensure that they maintain the high ethical standards the public expect from them. If a complainant reveals that a potential breach of this Code has taken place, Adur District Council or Worthing Borough Council may refer the allegations for investigation or decide to take other action.

On joining the Council, Officers are provided with a contract outlining the terms and conditions of their appointment. All staff must declare any financial interests, gifts or hospitality on a public register. Additionally, members are expected to declare any interests at the start of every meeting that they attend in accordance with Standing Orders. Members and officers are required to comply with approved policies.

#### ***Whistleblowing***

The Council is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of openness and accountability in all of its practices. The Council's [Whistleblowing policy](#) (revised in 2022) sets out the options and associated procedures for Council staff to raise concerns about potentially illegal, unethical or immoral practice and summarises expectations around handling the matter.

#### ***Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption***

The Council is committed to protecting any funds and property to which it has been entrusted and expects the highest standards of conduct from Members and Officers regarding the administration of financial affairs.

The Councils have a Corporate Anti-Fraud Team which acts to minimise the risk of fraud, bribery, corruption and dishonesty and recommends procedures for dealing with actual or expected fraud. The Council has an approved [Counter Fraud Policy and Strategy Statement](#) which can be found on the internet.

Guidance and policies for staff on the [Bribery Act 2010](#) and the [Prevention of Money Laundering](#) are found on the intranet.

**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**B. ENSURING OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

***Transparency***

The Council and its decisions are open and accessible to the community, service users, partners and its staff.

All reports requiring a decision are considered by appropriately qualified legal, and finance staff with expertise in the particular function area before they are progressed to the relevant Committee or group. This Council wants to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in the decision-making and applied to everything the Council does. To meet this responsibility, equality impact assessments are carried out on all major council services, functions, projects and policies in order to better understand whether they impact on people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010 in order to genuinely influence decision making.

All reports and details of decisions made can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/meetings-and-decisions/>

***Freedom of Information enquiries***

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI) gives anyone the right to ask for any information held by a public authority, which includes this Council, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.

***Engagement and communication***

It is recognised that people need information about what decisions are being taken locally, and how public money is being spent in order to hold the council to account for the services they provide. The views of customers are at the heart of the council's service delivery arrangements.

Adur and Worthing Councils' Corporate Plan called 'Our Plan' (<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/our-plan/>) identifies participation as one of the foundational principles upon which the council seeks to function and deliver public services. Key policy areas include: i) Involving people more closely in the design and provision of services ii) offering genuinely participatory ways for citizens to be involved in decision-making iii) Providing inclusive services by listening to underrepresented voices, creating equal access and meeting our equality duties; and iv) Supporting councillors in their work of representing and championing the interests of residents, communities and businesses.

# ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

### **B. ENSURING OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

#### ***Consultations***

To be effective the council participation approach seeks to inspire and support a genuine two-way dialogue with all sections of the community and other stakeholders. There are a number of ways people can get involved and connect with the council. Current consultations can be found on the [Councils website](#). Local people have the option to engage in a dialogue through: social media sites (including Facebook and twitter), petition schemes, stakeholder forums, tenant associations, council meetings (open to the public), and their local Councillor.

#### ***Complaints***

There is a clear and transparent complaints procedure for dealing with complaints. The Council operates a three-stage complaints procedure and promises to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days and respond fully within 10 working days for first-stage complaints, and 15 working days for second-stage complaints. If complainants remain dissatisfied they have the right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

#### ***Partnership working***

In addition to the partnership between Adur and Worthing (<http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/about-the-councils/partnership-working/>), this Council is involved in a number of different partnerships, at different levels each with their own set of terms of reference for effective joint working.

### **C. DEFINING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

#### ***Joint Corporate Priorities***

The Councils have agreed a plan 'Our Plan' that sets out Adur & Worthing Councils' ambition for our places' and our communities' prosperity and wellbeing over three years (2022 - 2025).

The Councils have agreed programmes of work for this period under four themes or 'Missions' which set out their aspirations for the town.

- **Thriving People**
- **Thriving Places**
- **Thriving Environment**
- **Thriving Economy**

Further details of how these priorities will be achieved are included in a programme of work which can be found on the internet at [Our Plan](#).

**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**C. DEFINING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

The Council receives regular reports on the progress in delivering the outcomes set out within Our Plan which reflects the priorities of both .

**D. DETERMINING THE INTERVENTIONS NECESSARY TO OPTIMISE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INTENDED OUTCOMES**

***Service planning and performance management***

In order to secure these outcomes for residents and service users, the Council needs to respond to some tough challenges. Through partnership working, increasing income from commercial activity and efficiency savings the Council has made significant savings over the past five years and needs to find a further £3.5m by 2028/29 in a climate of reducing funding from Central Government and rising demand for many of the Councils services. This means that it is important that, whilst we focus on achieving the organisational goal and aspirations, we continue to plan services in detail on an annual basis, focusing on challenges over the coming year but also considering the medium term horizon.

The Service Managers are responsible for preparing service plans that include details on: core business that must be delivered; plans for improvement, development and disinvestment; financial planning; arrangements for addressing key governance issues; key service risks and management/mitigation activity and arrangements for robust performance management within the service.

**E. DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S CAPABILITY, INCLUDING THE CAPABILITY OF ITS LEADERSHIP AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT**

***Recruitment and induction***

The Council operates a robust interview and selection process to ensure that Officers are only appointed if they have the right levels of skills and experience to effectively fulfil their role. If working with children and/or vulnerable adults they will be subject to an enhanced criminal records check prior to appointment. New Officers receive induction which provides information about how the organisation works, policies and health and safety. Newly elected Councillors are required to attend an induction which includes information on: roles and responsibilities; political management and decision-making; financial management and processes; health and safety; information governance; and safeguarding.



**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**E. DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S CAPABILITY, INCLUDING THE CAPABILITY OF ITS LEADERSHIP AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT**

***Training and development***

All Officers are required to complete a number of mandatory e-learning courses including health and safety, equalities and diversity, financial rules, and information governance. Officers and Members have access to a range of digital, technical, soft skills and job specific training courses. Compulsory training is provided for Members who sit on the following committees: Audit and Governance, Licensing Committee, and the Planning Committee. Other member-led training is available to Councillors through Democratic Services and Learning and Development. The package of support available gives Members the opportunity to build on existing skills and knowledge in order to carry out their roles effectively.

***Performance development and review***

All Officers receive regular one to ones with their Manager in order to monitor workload and performance and Managers are required to carry out regular performance development reviews, which seek to identify future training and development needs. Services consider workforce plans as part of the annual business planning process. Our service plans paint a picture of what we want to achieve; workforce planning helps to establish the nature of the workforce needed to deliver that vision, and produce a plan to fill the gaps. This helps to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs, at the right time.

**F. MANAGING RISKS AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL AND STRONG PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

***Effective scrutiny***

The Council operates a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) governed by its own terms of reference. It is important that JOSC acts effectively as one of their key tasks is to review and challenge the policy decisions that are taken by the Executive or the Joint Strategic Committee. Topics that are chosen to be 'scrutinised' are looked at in depth by a cross party panel of Councillors. They assess how the Council is performing and see whether they are providing the best possible, cost effective service for people in the area. The JOSC's findings are reported to the Joint Strategic Committee or Executive and may result in changes to the way in which services are delivered.

## **ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

### **F. MANAGING RISKS AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL AND STRONG PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

#### ***Financial management***

The Assistant Director of Finance is responsible for leading the promotion and delivery of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times, ensuring that budgets are agreed in advance and are robust, that value for money is provided by our services, and that the finance function is fit for purpose. She advises on financial matters to both the Executive and full Council and is actively involved in ensuring that the authority's strategic objectives are delivered sustainably in line with long term financial goals. The s151 Officer together with the finance team ensure that new policies or service proposals are costed, financially appraised, fully financed and identifies the key assumptions and financial risks that face the council.

Financial Regulations are regularly reviewed by the s151 Officer to ensure that the Council can meet all of its responsibilities under various laws. They set the framework on how we manage our financial dealings and are part of our Constitution. They also set the financial standards that will ensure consistency of approach and the controls needed to minimise risks. The s151 Officer has a statutory duty to report any unlawful financial activity or failure to set or keep to a balanced budget. She also has a number of statutory powers in order to allow this role to be carried out, such as the right to insist that the local authority makes sufficient financial provision for the cost of internal audit.

#### ***Risk management***

All significant risks (defined as something that may result in failure in service delivery, significant financial loss, non-achievement of key objectives, damage to health, legal action or reputational damage) must be logged on a Corporate Risk Register, profiled (as high/medium/low), and mitigating measures/assurances must be put in place. These risks are regularly reported to CLT and the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.

**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**G. IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES IN TRANSPARENCY REPORTING AND AUDIT TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

***Joint Audit and Governance Committee***

The Joint Audit and Governance Committee has the responsibility for receiving many reports that deal with issues that are key to good governance. The Committee undertakes the core functions of an Audit Committee identified in CIPFA's practical guidance. The group has an agreed set of terms of reference, which sets out their roles and responsibilities of its members.

***Internal audit***

The Head of Internal audit is a qualified accountant who has full access to senior management and the Joint Audit and Governance Committee (which fulfils the role of an audit committee). The audit team is properly resourced. The Council is in compliance with the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010).

The Head of Internal Audit provides an independent and objective annual opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance each year. This is carried out by the Internal Audit team in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The Head of Internal Audit's Annual 2023/24 report is in draft pending the completion of outstanding audit reviews, the Head of Internal Audit's overall opinion will be issued with the final report due at the end of May 2024. The draft report can be found on the council [website](#).

***Annual accounts***

The Council publishes full audited accounts each year which are published on the website at: [Statement of Accounts](#)

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**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

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***REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS***

Adur District Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by relevant stakeholders, the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Council has procedures in place to ensure the maintenance and review of the effectiveness of the governance framework, which includes reports to and reviews by the following:

- the Joint Strategic Committee, Executives, the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- internal and external audit
- other explicit review/assurance mechanisms.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The current detailed plan to address any weakness and improve the Council's governance was approved on the 28th May 2024 at the Joint Audit and Governance Committee in the report titled 'Annual Governance Statements 2023/24'. This can be found on the Council's intranet using the following link : [website](#)

***Overall opinion:***

It is the opinion of the Council that, with the exception of the issues identified below, the framework is satisfactory. The Council will continue to assess and make improvements to the governance framework.

***SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES***

There is one significant governance issue either identified by red status on the Governance Action Plan, or via Corporate Leadership team, or from the Internal Audit Annual Report or via a report from the Monitoring Officer:

i) Housing management;

The Council identified the need to improve its management of the Housing Service and other key housing management policies and processes. More recently, the Council has identified significant issues with the safety and condition of the properties and referred itself to the regulator of social housing in February 2023.

Actions are being undertaken to improve the service by way of:

- The implementation of a 2 year housing improvement plan to address the issues identified by the Regulator;
- Improvements to the internal control environment to ensure that all works are properly commissioned and paid for;
- A major review of all the inspection regimes.
- A review of the staffing and management of the service.
- A review of the contractual arrangements for the housing repairs service including letting new contracts for services where appropriate.
- A review of all of the policies and procedures relating to service and leaseholder charges
- A full discovery and review of all Housing Service IT systems
- Establish an effective and strong resident engagement regime with all parts of the service.

The council has liaised with the Housing Regulator throughout the process with the most recent Progress Review meeting in April 2024.

Regular update reports are presented to the Joint Audit and Governance committee on progress against the Home Improvement Plan.

At the end of the transformation programme, internal audit have been commissioned to undertake a review to ensure that all outstanding audit recommendations have been addressed.

### ***OTHER ISSUES***

The Governance Action Plan has been updated to deal with any issues brought forward from the 2022 review together with any issues which have been identified during the current review.

**ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Included within the governance requirements as detailed in the 'Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Public Services' are recommended best practice that:

- the Chief Financial Officer should be professionally qualified,
- report directly to the Chief Executive and
- be a member of the leadership team, with a status at least equivalent to other members.

The position within Adur and Worthing Councils does not wholly conform to the above statement. The Assistant Director of Finance (Chief Financial Officer) does not report directly to the Chief Executive, but reports to one of the Directors in line with the reporting requirements for all Assistant Directors. The Assistant Director of Finance does not have the same status as the Directors. The Chief Executive, Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) hold regular scheduled meetings to discuss governance matters and will convene as required for any urgent considerations.

The Council complies with all other requirements of the statement.

***PROPOSED ACTION***

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Leader of Adur District Council**

**Catherine Howe  
Chief Executive of Adur & Worthing  
Councils**

Dated: 28 May 2024

Dated: 28 May 2024

## WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

### ***SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY***

Worthing Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016 (the Framework). The Framework expects that local authorities will put in place proper arrangements for the governance of their affairs and which facilitate the effective exercise of functions and ensures that the responsibilities set out above are met.

At least once a year, Local Authorities are statutorily required to review their governance arrangements. The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the Framework fulfils this requirement.

A copy of the code is on our website at [www.adur.gov.uk](http://www.adur.gov.uk) or [www.adur-worthing.gov.uk](http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk) or can be obtained from the Council. This statement explains how Worthing Borough Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

### ***THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

### ***THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements are summarised below:

## Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework

### Council, Executive and Leader

- Provides leadership and develops the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcome for residents and service users.
- Develops the vision into objectives for the Council and its partnerships

### Decision making

- All decisions are made in the open
- Decisions are recorded on the Council website
- The scheme of delegations which details the decision making arrangements is regularly updated
- The monitoring Officer ensures that all decisions made comply with relevant laws and regulations

### Risk Management

- Risk registers identify both operational and strategic risks
- Key risks and opportunities are considered by the Corporate Leadership Team every quarter
- Risks and opportunities are reported to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee every quarter and inform the work of the internal audit team

### Scrutiny and Review

- The Joint overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews Council policy and can challenge the decisions made.
- The Joint Audit and Governance Committee undertakes all of the core functions of an audit committee.
- The Joint Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for review and approving the Council's Governance arrangements and undertakes the role of a Standards Committee ensuring that members comply with the Code of Conduct

### Corporate Leadership Team

- The Council's Corporate Leadership Team comprises the Chief Executive, the three Directors, Assistant Directors and the Head of Technology and Design who are responsible for the delivery of the Council's aims and objectives.
- The head of paid service is the Chief Executive who is responsible for all Council Staff and leading an effective Corporate Leadership Team.
- CLT seeks advice from the Council's Chief Financial Officer (Assistant Director for Finance) who is responsible for safeguarding the Council's financial position
- CLT seeks advice from the Monitoring Officer who is the Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services. They are responsible for ensuring legality and promoting high standards of public conduct.

The operation of this authority's governance framework is described in the sections below. This sets out how the Council has complied with the seven principles set out in the new Framework during 2023/24.



## ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

The governance framework gives the Members and the Organisation, in a number of ways, the confidence and certainty that what needs to be done is being done. The chart below provides a high level overview of the Council's key responsibilities, how they are met and the means by which assurance is delivered.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO	HOW WE DO IT
<p><b>Principle A</b> Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Constitution</li> <li>• The Monitoring Officer (Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services)</li> <li>• Section 151 Officer (Assistant Director for Finance)</li> <li>• Codes of conduct</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>• Bribery Act 2010 policy guidance</li> <li>• Corporate anti-fraud work</li> <li>• Procurement Strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle B</b> Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations</li> <li>• Terms of reference for partnerships</li> <li>• Freedom of information requests</li> <li>• Complaints procedure</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle C</b> Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational goals</li> <li>• Service planning</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Community Strategy</li> <li>• Procurement Strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle D</b> Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service planning</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• Options appraisals</li> <li>• Whole life costing</li> <li>• Equalities Impact Assessments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle E</b> Developing the Council's capability, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust interview and selection process</li> <li>• Training and development</li> <li>• Workforce planning</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> <li>• Performance development reviews</li> <li>• Talent management</li> <li>• HR Policies &amp; procedures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle F</b> Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective member scrutiny function</li> <li>• Financial management and MTFP</li> <li>• Corporate risk register</li> <li>• Annual audit plan</li> <li>• Information Security policies</li> <li>• Compliance with the requirements of the Public Service Network (PSN)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle G</b> Implementing good practices in transparency reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports are held on the website</li> <li>• Annual audited financial statements are publically available</li> <li>• Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>• Effective Internal Audit Service</li> </ul>

**WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
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***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**HOW WE KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IS BEING DONE**

Joint Audit and Governance Committee function and self-assessment; Corporate Governance Group; Scrutiny Reviews; Review of progress made in addressing issues; Performance monitoring; Review of compliance with corporate governance controls; Review of accounts; Employee opinion surveys; Internal audits and external audits; and Inspections and recommendations made by external agencies.

The following sections look at how the Council delivers governance principles in more detail:

**A. BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY, DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES, AND RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW**

***The Constitution***

The constitution sets out how the Council operates; the roles and responsibilities of members, officers and the scrutiny and review functions; how decisions are made; and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Although there is no longer a statutory requirement, this Council continues with this arrangement internally and is in the process of updating the constitution to ensure it reflects current practice. As well as working together as a single organisation and with our neighbour Adur District Council, members and officers continue to improve their working relations with other organisations, both locally and sub-nationally, to achieve a common purpose of improved efficiency and effectiveness.

***The Monitoring Officer***

The Monitoring Officer is a statutory function and ensures that the Council, its officers, and its elected members, maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do. The Monitoring Officer ensures that the Council is compliant with laws and regulations, as well as internal policies and procedures. She is also responsible for matters relating to the conduct of Councillors and Officers, and for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Council's Constitution.

***Section 151 Officer***

Whilst all Council Members and Officers have a general financial responsibility, the s151 of the Local Government Act 1972 specifies that one Officer in particular must be responsible for the financial administration of the organisation and that this Officer must be CCAB qualified. This is typically the highest ranking qualified finance officer and in this Council this is Emma Thomas, who is also the Assistant Director for Finance.

# WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

### **A. BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY, DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES, AND RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW**

#### ***Codes of Conduct***

Codes of Conduct exist for both staff and members.

All Councillors have to keep to a Code of Conduct to ensure that they maintain the high ethical standards the public expect from them. If a complainant reveals that a potential breach of this Code has taken place, Adur District Council or Worthing Borough Council may refer the allegations for investigation or decide to take other action.

On joining the Council, Officers are provided with a contract outlining the terms and conditions of their appointment. All staff must declare any financial interests, gifts or hospitality on a public register. Additionally, members are expected to declare any interests at the start of every meeting that they attend in accordance with Standing Orders. Members and officers are required to comply with approved policies.

#### ***Whistleblowing***

The Council is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of openness and accountability in all of its practices. The Council's [Whistleblowing policy](#) (revised in 2022) sets out the options and associated procedures for Council staff to raise concerns about potentially illegal, unethical or immoral practice and summarises expectations around handling the matter.

#### ***Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption***

The Council is committed to protecting any funds and property to which it has been entrusted and expects the highest standards of conduct from Members and Officers regarding the administration of financial affairs.

The Councils have a Corporate Anti-Fraud Team which acts to minimise the risk of fraud, bribery, corruption and dishonesty and recommends procedures for dealing with actual or expected fraud. The Council has an approved [Counter Fraud Policy and Strategy Statement](#) which can be found on the internet.

Guidance and policies for staff on the [Bribery Act 2010](#) and the [Prevention of Money Laundering](#) are found on the intranet.

# WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

### **B. ENSURING OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

#### ***Transparency***

The Council and its decisions are open and accessible to the community, service users, partners and its staff. All reports requiring a decision are considered by appropriately qualified legal, and finance staff with expertise in the particular function area before they are progressed to the relevant Committee or group. This Council wants to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in the decision-making and applied to everything the Council does. To meet this responsibility, equality impact assessments are carried out on all major council services, functions, projects and policies in order to better understand whether they impact on people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010 in order to genuinely influence decision making.

All reports and details of decisions made can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/meetings-and-decisions/>

#### ***Freedom of Information enquiries***

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI) gives anyone the right to ask for any information held by a public authority, which includes this Council, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.

#### ***Engagement and communication***

It is recognised that people need information about what decisions are being taken locally, and how public money is being spent in order to hold the council to account for the services they provide. The views of customers are at the heart of the council's service delivery arrangements.

Adur and Worthing Councils' Corporate Plan called 'Our Plan' (<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/our-plan/>) identifies participation as one of the foundational principles upon which the council seeks to function and deliver public services. Key policy areas include: i) Involving people more closely in the design and provision of services ii) offering genuinely participatory ways for citizens to be involved in decision-making iii) Providing inclusive services by listening to underrepresented voices, creating equal access and meeting our equality duties; and iv) Supporting councillors in their work of representing and championing the interests of residents, communities and businesses.

## WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

### ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

#### **B. ENSURING OPENNESS AND COMPREHENSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

##### ***Consultations***

To be effective the council participation approach seeks to inspire and support a genuine two-way dialogue with all sections of the community and other stakeholders. There are a number of ways people can get involved and connect with the council. Current consultations can be found on the [Councils website](#). Local people have the option to engage in a dialogue through: social media sites (including Facebook and twitter), petition schemes, stakeholder forums, tenant associations, council meetings (open to the public), and their local Councillor.

##### ***Complaints***

There is a clear and transparent complaints procedure for dealing with complaints. The Council operates a three-stage complaints procedure and promises to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days and respond fully within 10 working days for first-stage complaints, and 15 working days for second-stage complaints. If complainants remain dissatisfied they have the right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

##### ***Partnership working***

In addition to the partnership between Adur and Worthing (<http://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/about-the-councils/partnership-working/>), this Council is involved in a number of different partnerships, at different levels – each with their own set of terms of reference for effective joint working.

#### **C. DEFINING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

##### ***Joint Corporate Priorities***

The Councils have agreed a plan 'Our Plan' that sets out Adur & Worthing Councils' ambition for our places' and our communities' prosperity and wellbeing over three years (2022 - 2025).

The Councils have agreed programmes of work for this period under four themes or 'Missions' which set out their aspirations for the town.

- **Thriving People**
- **Thriving Places**
- **Thriving Environment**
- **Thriving Economy**

Further details of how these priorities will be achieved are included in a programme of work which can be found on the internet at [Our Plan](#).

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***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**C. DEFINING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

The priorities included under the themes are reviewed on an annual basis.

The Council receives regular reports on the progress in delivering the outcomes set out within Our Plan which reflects the priorities of both .

**D. DETERMINING THE INTERVENTIONS NECESSARY TO OPTIMISE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INTENDED OUTCOMES**

***Service planning and performance management***

In order to secure these outcomes for residents and service users, the Council needs to respond to some tough challenges. Through partnership working and efficiency savings the Council has made significant savings over the past five years and needs to find a further £5.6m by 2028/29 in a climate of reducing funding from Central Government and rising demand for many of the Councils services. This means that it is important that, whilst we focus on achieving the organisational goal and aspirations, we continue to plan services in detail on an annual basis, focusing on challenges over the coming year but also considering the medium term horizon.

The Heads of Service are responsible for preparing service plans that include detail on: core business that must be delivered; plans for improvement, development and disinvestment; financial planning; arrangements for addressing key governance issues; key service risks and management/mitigation activity and arrangements for robust performance management within the service.

## **WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

### ***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

#### **E. DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S CAPABILITY, INCLUDING THE CAPABILITY OF ITS LEADERSHIP AND THE INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT**

##### ***Recruitment and induction***

The Council operates a robust interview and selection process to ensure that Officers are only appointed if they have the right levels of skills and experience to effectively fulfil their role. If working with children and/or vulnerable adults they will be subject to an enhanced criminal records check prior to appointment. New Officers receive induction which provides information about how the organisation works, policies and health and safety. Newly elected Councillors are required to attend an induction which includes information on: roles and responsibilities; political management and decision-making; financial management and processes; health and safety; information governance; and safeguarding.

##### ***Training and development***

All Officers are required to complete a number of mandatory e-learning courses including health and safety, equalities and diversity, financial rules, and information governance. Officers and Members have access to a range of IS, technical, soft skills and job specific training courses. Compulsory training is provided for Members who sit on the following committees: Audit and Governance, Licensing Committee, and the Planning Committee. Other member-led training is available to Councillors through Democratic Services and Learning and Development. The package of support available gives Members the opportunity to build on existing skills and knowledge in order to carry out their roles effectively.

##### ***Performance development and review***

All Officers receive regular one to ones with their Manager in order to monitor workload and performance and Managers are required to carry out a performance development review on an annual basis, which seeks to identify future training and development needs. Services consider workforce plans as part of the annual business planning process. Our service plans paint a picture of what we want to achieve; workforce planning helps to establish the nature of the workforce needed to deliver that vision, and produce a plan to fill the gaps. This helps to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs, at the right time.



## **WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

### **F. MANAGING RISKS AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL AND STRONG PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

#### ***Effective scrutiny***

The Council operates Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) governed by its own terms of reference. It is important that JOSC acts effectively as one of their key tasks is to review and challenge the policy decisions that are taken by the Executive or the Joint Strategic Committee. Topics that are chosen to be 'scrutinised' are looked at in depth by a cross party panel of Councillors. They assess how the Council is performing and see whether they are providing the best possible, cost effective service for people in the area. The JOSC's findings are reported to the Joint Strategic Committee or Executive and may result in changes to the way in which services are delivered.

#### ***Financial management***

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for leading the promotion and delivery of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times, ensuring that budgets are agreed in advance and are robust, that value for money is provided by our services, and that the finance function is fit for purpose. She advises on financial matters to both the Executive and full Council and is actively involved in ensuring that the authority's strategic objectives are delivered sustainably in line with long term financial goals. The s151 Officer together with the finance team ensure that new policies or service proposals are costed, financially appraised, fully financed and identifies the key assumptions and financial risks that face the council.

Financial Regulations have been recently updated by the s151 Officer so that the Council can meet all of its responsibilities under various laws and are annually reviewed. They set the framework on how we manage our financial dealings and are part of our Constitution. They also set the financial standards that will ensure consistency of approach and the controls needed to minimise risks. The s151 Officer has a statutory duty to report any unlawful financial activity or failure to set or keep to a balanced budget. She also has a number of statutory powers in order to allow this role to be carried out, such as the right to insist that the local authority makes sufficient financial provision for the cost of internal audit.

#### ***Risk management***

All significant risks (defined as something that may result in failure in service delivery, significant financial loss, non-achievement of key objectives, damage to health, legal action or reputational damage) must be logged on a Corporate Risk Register, profiled (as high/medium/low), and mitigating measures/assurances must be put in place. These risks are regularly reported to CLT and the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.

**WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
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***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**G. IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES IN TRANSPARENCY REPORTING AND AUDIT TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

***Joint Audit and Governance Committee***

As its name suggests, the Joint Audit and Governance Committee has the responsibility for receiving many reports that deal with issues that are key to good governance. The Committee undertakes the core functions of an Audit Committee identified in CIPFA's practical guidance. The group has an agreed set of terms of reference, which sets out their roles and responsibilities of its members.

***Internal audit***

The Head of Internal audit is a qualified accountant who has full access to senior management and the Joint Audit and Governance Committee (which fulfils the role of an audit committee). The audit team is properly resourced. The Council is in compliance with the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010).

The Head of Internal Audit provides an independent and objective annual opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance each year. This is carried out by the Internal Audit team in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

The Head of Internal Audit's Annual 2023/24 report is in draft pending the completion of outstanding audit reviews, the Head of Internal Audit's overall opinion will be issued with the final report due at the end of May 2024. The draft report can be found on the council [website](#).

***THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK***

**G. IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES IN TRANSPARENCY REPORTING AND AUDIT TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

***Annual accounts***

The Council publishes full audited accounts each year which are published on the website at [Statement of Accounts](#) .

# WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

## ***REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS***

Worthing Borough Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by relevant stakeholders, the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Council has procedures in place to ensure the maintenance and review of the effectiveness of the governance framework, which includes reports to and reviews by the following:

- the Joint Strategic Committee, Executives, the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- internal and external audit
- other explicit review/assurance mechanisms.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Joint Audit and Governance Committee, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The current detailed plan to address any weakness and improve the Council's governance was approved on the 28th May 2024 at the Joint Audit and Governance Committee in the report titled 'Annual Governance Statements 2023/24'. This can be found on the Council's intranet using the following link : [Website](#)

### ***Overall opinion:***

It is the opinion of the Council that the governance framework is satisfactory. The Council will continue to assess and make improvements to the governance framework.

## ***SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES***

There are no significant governance issues either identified by red status on the Governance Action Plan or from the Internal Audit Annual Report or via a report from the Monitoring Officer.

## ***OTHER ISSUES***

The Governance Action Plan has been updated to deal with any issues brought forward from the 2022 review together with any issues which have been identified during the current review.

## **WORTHING BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

Part of the governance requirements as detailed in the 'Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Public Services' are that:

- the Chief Financial Officer should be professionally qualified,
- report directly to the Chief Executive; and
- be a member of the leadership team, with a status at least equivalent to other members.

The position within Adur and Worthing Councils does not wholly conform to the above statement. The Assistant Director of Finance (Chief Financial Officer) does not report directly to the Chief Executive, but reports to one of the Directors in line with the reporting requirements for all Assistant Directors. The Assistant Director of Finance does not have the same status as the Directors. The Chief Executive, Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) hold regular scheduled meetings to discuss governance matters and will convene as required for any urgent considerations.

The Council complies with all other requirements of the statement.

### ***PROPOSED ACTION***

We propose over the coming year to keep our governance arrangements under review and to continuously improve them. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rebecca Cooper**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**Worthing Borough Council**

**Catherine Howe**  
**Chief Executive of**  
**Adur & Worthing Councils**

**Dated: 28 May 2024**

**Dated: 28 May 2024**