

Non-Executive Report of the: Audit Committee 21 July 2020	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain Corporate Director, Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Annual Governance Statement	

Originating Officer(s)	Paul Rock
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Executive Summary

As part of the Annual Accounts and in accordance with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework. The Council is required to undertake a review of its corporate governance processes, systems and the assurances on the governance framework to support the creation of an Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendations:

The Audit Committee is recommended to:

1. Review and agree the 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that the Authority must agree an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), prepared in accordance with proper practices published by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for publication with its Statement of Accounts. The Audit Committee provides an important role in reviewing the effectiveness of governance arrangements within the Council and therefore the recommendation above falls within the terms of reference for the committee.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 None.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control that underpins the Annual Governance Statement must be carried out at least annually. The Council's AGS forms part of the annual accounts. Its content is prepared from various sources and assurance processes including but not only the Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit.
- 3.2 Evidence sources collated for drafting the 2018/19 AGS were as follows:
- A review against the Council's own Code of Corporate Governance
 - Consultation with, and assurance provided by Corporate Directors;
 - Work undertaken during the year by Internal Audit and other inspection bodies; and
 - A review of progress against the delivery of the 2017/18 AGS significant governance issues and action plan.
- 3.3 Further to comments from the Audit Committee in May 2020 revisions have been made and additional content has been added. The changes are tracked and highlighted in red for ease of reference. In summary, the following changes were made:
- References to pensions administration have been aligned to the report submitted to the Pensions Committee in November 2019.
 - The resignation and subsequent prosecution of former Councillor Muhammad Halun Miah Harun has been included.
 - A summary of the outcome of the Planning Peer Challenge for Tower Hamlets Council has been added under the 'Other Inspections' section.
- 3.4 The AGS is presented to the Audit Committee for review and agreement. The AGS has been signed and agreed by the Chief Executive and Mayor.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific equality implications resulting from this report

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.

- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakness of the control environment and to oversee the financial reporting.

5.3 This report has therefore been provided within this context to ensure the committee is able to perform its core function and to consider summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 Other than the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 there are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 This report demonstrates the Council's compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Annual Governance Statement

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

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