



AGENDA ITEM:

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: 28 June 2016

Report of: Borough Treasurer

Contact for further information: Marc Taylor (Extn. 5092)
(E-mail: marc.taylor@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2015/2016

Borough wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the Council's Annual Governance Statement, which is set out in Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Annual Governance Statement 2015/2016 be approved and commended to the Leader and Chief Executive for signature.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Council to publish an Annual Governance Statement with its financial reports. The CIPFA / SOLACE Framework provides guidance on the proper practices to be followed to fulfil this requirement and Officers have followed this approach in producing the Annual Governance Statement, and have also had regard to other guidance and best practice requirements.

3.2 The terms of reference of this Committee include responsibility for approving the Annual Governance Statement and commending it for signature by the Leader and Chief Executive.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement provides a summary of the Council's internal control environment and a review of its effectiveness. This year's Statement confirms that the framework is adequate and that it is working effectively. This continues the Council's track record of demonstrating solid financial and governance arrangements. The main governance issue that has been identified relates to the financial challenges facing local authorities as a result of reductions in government grant funding. This risk is included on the Council's Key Risk Register and the primary mechanism for addressing it will continue to be the Policy Options process.
- 4.2 The Authority has consistently received positive feedback from its external auditors on its arrangements for internal control, and the most recent Annual Audit Letter has concluded the same. In the Annual Audit Report, elsewhere on this agenda, the Council's Internal Audit Manager has summarised the findings from Internal Audit activity over the year and these findings are incorporated into the Annual Governance Statement.
- 4.3 All Heads of Service and Senior Managers have considered and signed a Certificate on Internal Control to confirm that governance arrangements and internal controls have not been compromised during the past year in their areas of responsibility. As it is Managers who are charged with embedding governance systems in their areas, this is an integral part of the annual review process.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All the activity referred to in this report is covered by existing budget provisions.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Failure to publish an Annual Governance Statement with the Statement of Accounts would breach one of the Council's statutory obligations.
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Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix – West Lancashire Borough Council 2015/16 Annual Governance Statement