

# Audit and Risk Committee

25 July 2022

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|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Report title</b>                            | Code of Corporate Governance  |                                     |
| <b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b> | Councillor Paula Brookfield<br>Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities |                                     |
| <b>Accountable director</b>                    | David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer                                     |                                     |
| <b>Originating service</b>                     | Governance  |                                     |
| <b>Accountable employee</b>                    | David Pattison  | Chief Operating Officer             |
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| <b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>     | Governance and Ethics Committee<br>Council                                  | 7 July 2022<br>14 September 2022    |

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## Recommendation for decision:

The Audit and Risk Committee recommends that Council:

1. Considers and approves the revised Code of Corporate Governance.
2. Authorises the Chief Operating Officer to publicise the document and add it to the Constitution.

## Recommendation for noting:

The Audit and Risk Committee notes that:

1. The Audit and Risk Committee will consider the revised Code of Corporate Governance.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report outlines the improvements made to the Code of Corporate Governance. The updating of the Code of Corporate Governance is a recommendation from the Council's Annual Governance Statement in 2021. This Code has been updated to reflect changes in the guidance issued supporting the Code. It is recommended that the Council agrees to the addition of this document to the Constitution to ensure continuing lawfulness and effectiveness.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Code of Corporate Governance (the Code) aims to set out the principles of good governance and to describe the arrangements in place that ensure the Council conducts its business in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2 The document was developed in 2016 following the introduction of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executive (SOLACE) framework and guidance, which recommends best practice for local authorities to follow. There are seven core principles, each of which is supported by sub-principles, to provide a governance framework.
- 2.3 Compliance with the Council's Code underpins the effectiveness of its systems of internal controls, and this in turn informs the Annual Governance Statement which accompanies its Annual Statement of Account.
- 2.4 The Code forms part of the Council's Constitution although it is not currently included within the published version.

## **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

- 3.1 The Council is committed to maintaining robust arrangements for good governance and a periodic review of the Code was undertaken to ensure that:
- A. The Council was still complying with the core principles.
  - B. It reflected the most up to date ways in which the Council operates, including its expectations and standards.
- 3.2 At the same time the document was revised to ensure that it was more inclusive without losing any important detail. The revised version of the document has reduced in length, and includes a diagram showing the relationship between each of the seven core principles.
- 3.3 To ensure the document is used and can be easily understood it relies on signposting readers to other documents, so that they can easily find what they need without being distracted by unnecessary information.

3.4 The views of the Council's Head of Strategy, Head of Communications, Head of Audit and Director of Finance were taken into account and incorporated into the revised version of the Code.

3.5 Critically the Code can and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

[AS/29062022/V]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 Compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance supports the Council's review of the effectiveness of its system of internal controls as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

[SZ/29062022/P]

#### **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

#### **7.0 All other Implications**

7.1 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### **8.0 Schedule of background papers**

8.1 None.

#### **9.0 Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1: Code of Corporate Governance.