

Report to: **Audit Committee**

Date: **25 June 2019**

Title: **Annual Report of the Statutory Officers' Panel (2018-2019)**

Portfolio Area: **Resources and Performance, Cllr Edmonds**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **N/A**

Date next steps can be taken: **25 June 2019**  
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)

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**Recommendation:**

**To note the Annual Report of the Statutory Officers' Panel and make any necessary recommendations**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Statutory Officers' Panel comprises the officers that the Council must appoint to ensure that it operates fairly and within the law. These officers are the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 (Finance) Officer and the Monitoring Officer. The Panel meets four times a year and has a forward plan of matters that it considers on an annual basis.
- 1.2 The Panel has the appropriate knowledge, expertise and levels of seniority to consider the extent to which the Council complies with, and manages, the following areas:
  - the principles and elements of control and governance frameworks;
  - strategic risk management;
  - fraud and corruption; and
  - regulatory framework (policies and strategies)
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the work that the Statutory Officers' Panel has carried out over the last financial year (April 2018 to March 2019).

## 2. Work of the Statutory Officers' Panel

- 2.1 The Statutory Officers' Panel (the Panel) meets quarterly and invites other officers as required, such as the Deputy Chief Executive, Internal Auditor, and the Health & Safety Officer.
- 2.2 Over the past financial year (April 2018 to March 2019) the Panel has considered the following issues to ensure that the Council manages and complies with its governance, strategic risk management, fraud and corruption, and regulatory framework requirements.
- 2.3 **Corporate Governance:** the Panel ensures that the Council complies and manages:
  - The Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement to ensure that they are presented to the June Audit Committee. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to provide evidence that the Council continuously reviews its internal control and risk management processes and to identify any actions and solutions in a timely way.
  - The annual review of the Council's Constitution and its various parts to ensure that it is fully considered by the Audit Committee before adoption at the Annual Meeting
  - The Annual Report on the Council year, to ensure it is considered at the Annual Meeting
  - Oversight of the review and adoption process for the Corporate Strategy, and underlying corporate themes.
  - Other governance issues as they arise
- 2.4 **Risk Management:** the Panel:
  - Oversees the Council's Risk Management Policy to ensure it complies with current best practice
  - Ensures that the Senior Leadership Team considers the Corporate Risk Register regularly
  - Identifies, evaluates, manages and mitigates strategic and operational risk and that risk management is implemented and embedded across the organisation
- 2.5 **Regulatory Framework:**  
Annual review of the anti-fraud, corruption and bribery strategy, the anti-money laundering policy and the whistle blowing policy to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect best practice. If amendments are required, the policies are brought to the Audit Committee for consideration.
- 2.6 **Other:** during the year the Panel has also considered:
  - Peer Review: strategic overview of the project, consideration of the Peer Challenge report, ensuring Member engagement, and implementation and resulting action plan
  - Business continuity & emergency planning: particularly in the light of Brexit
  - Induction Programme: oversight and ensuring that a timely and comprehensive Induction Programme was delivered (including external training where appropriate)
  - Oversight of internal audit actions and budgetary framework
  - Oversight of the implementation and embedding of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing plan

## 3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 The Statutory Officers' Panel ensures that the Council deals with the above issues in a timely manner, and identifies any issues so that they are

resolved early on in the process. Ensuring that the Council manages and complies with its governance, risk and regulatory matters ensures that the Council has a sound basis for making decisions and delivering its services.

- 3.2 The Panel reviews its action from the previous meeting to ensure implementation and compliance with agreed actions. Success is measured by early identification of issues, and compliance with the statutory requirements which are reflected in positive audit reports.

#### 4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The Council has various statutory duties with which it must comply. It is possible for the Council to operate without a Statutory Officers' Panel but the risk of failing to identify issues early on (together with the risk of the Council failing to comply with these requirements) would increase with a potentially higher risk of legal challenges against the Council.

#### 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 That the Audit Committee consider this report and make any necessary recommendations.

#### 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The Council is required by law to appoint a Head of Paid Service, Section 151 (Finance) Officer and a Monitoring Officer to ensure that the Council operates lawfully and fairly, and complies with its fiduciary duties.</p> <p>The Statutory Officers' Panel complies with good practice and ensures that senior officers are aware of and comply with important governance (legal and financial), corporate risk, fraud and other regulatory issues.</p> <p>The Audit Committee is responsible for financial, governance and risk controls.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report but the purpose of the Panel is to ensure that the Council oversees, manages and complies with its financial responsibilities.</p>
Risk	Y	<p>The work carried out by the Statutory Officers' Panel minimises significantly the risk of the Council failing to comply with its requirements under legal and financial governance, risk, systems of internal control and the Council's regulatory framework.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		<p>The Council – compliance with important governance (legal and financial), corporate risk, fraud and other regulatory issues enables the Council to</p>

		delivering efficient and effective services.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		N/a
Safeguarding		N/a
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		N/a
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		N/a
Other implications		N/a

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

None

**Background Papers:**

None