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| TITLE | Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 |
| FOR CONSIDERATION BY | Audit Committee on 6 June 2018 |
| WARD | None Specific |
| DIRECTOR | Interim Chief Executive - Manjeet Gill |

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 that came into force on 1 April 2015 require authorities to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts.

The purpose of the AGS is to comply with this legal requirement and provide a transparent and accurate representation of the council's governance arrangements during 2017/18 and highlight issues that the council wishes to improve.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is asked to consider and approve the AGS on behalf of the Council, prior to it being included in the final Statement of Accounts.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The AGS covers the following key aspects of the governance environment in place at Wokingham Borough Council during 2017/18:-

- Establishing and monitoring the achievement of the council's objectives;
- Facilitation of Policy and Decision-making;
- Financial Management;
- Performance Management; and
- Risk Management.

It also comments on the effectiveness of the council's governance arrangements, including the system of internal control and the effectiveness of Internal Audit. It identifies areas of significant governance weaknesses that the council intends to address to further improve the governance framework in place. This demonstrates the council's commitment to openness and transparency.

Background

The AGS has been produced by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) following consideration of a number of Management Assurance Statements (MAS) produced by the council's three Directors, interim Director and two Assistant Directors. MAS's completed by WBC for 2017/18 have been signed by the relevant Director and Executive Lead Member to provide accountability and assurance to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, who are legally required to sign the AGS prior to it being included in the final Statement of Accounts.

Analysis of Issues

The AGS sets out the key governance issues during 2017-18.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

| | How much will it Cost/ (Save) | Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall | Revenue or Capital? |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Current Financial Year (Year 1) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

Cross-Council Implications

The AGS considers all aspects of the Council's services and operations.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Not applicable

List of Background Papers

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

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