

TITLE	Annual Governance Statement 2018-19
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 24 July 2019
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 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 2018/19 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 2018/19:

- 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). This followed consideration of a number of Management Assurance Statements (MAS) produced by the Council's five Directors, in conjunction with their senior management teams.

The MAS completed for 2018/19 have been approved 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.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £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)	Nil	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Nil

Cross-Council Implications

Not applicable

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Not applicable

List of Background Papers

Appendix A - 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement
Appendix A(I) – 2018-19 Draft MAS Exceptions & Improvements

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