

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	21 MAY 2024	5
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of Lead Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Ellie Gaunt.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The report presents the Annual Governance Statement prepared under the CIPFA/SOLACE framework, the local code of corporate governance, for approval.

RECOVERABILITY

This decision is not recoverable because it relates to a recommendation to the council or to any other committee or sub-committee of the council.

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the Annual Governance Statement for signature by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

REPORT

1. A sound system of corporate governance underpins the achievement of all the Council's corporate objectives.
2. The Council has adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. This statement explains how Fylde Council has complied with the code and shows how the effectiveness of governance arrangements have been monitored during the year.
3. The preparation and publication of an annual governance statement is necessary to comply with Regulation 4(3) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which requires authorities to prepare a statement of internal control in accordance with "proper practices". The CIPFA/SOLACE guidance identifies the production of an annual governance statement in accordance with the guidance as "proper practices".

Summary of the local code

4. The CIPFA/SOLACE guidance quotes the following definition of governance from "International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector": "*Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved*". It continues: "*To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entity's objectives while acting in the public interest at all times...Acting in the public interest implies*

primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders”.

5. The council’s code is underpinned by the following seven core principles from the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance:
 - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the law
 - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
 - Developing the Council’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
 - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability
6. The Local Code describes the arrangements that have been or are being established within the Council to comply with the requirements. The code requires the Council to:
 - consider the extent to which it complies with the above seven core principles and requirements of good governance set out in the Framework.
 - identify systems, processes and documentation that provide evidence of compliance.
 - identify the individuals and committees responsible for monitoring and reviewing the systems, processes and documentation identified.
 - identify the issues that have not been addressed adequately in the authority and consider how they should be addressed.
 - Identify the individuals who would be responsible for undertaking the actions required and plan accordingly.
7. The Local Code was also updated in the Summer of 2020 with a report brought forward for consideration by the former Audit and Standards committee. The Corporate Governance Group, currently comprising the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Head of Governance together with the lead internal auditor, has conducted a self-assessment of the council’s governance against this checklist.

Annual Governance Statement

8. The governance statement is attached to this report and is presented for approval by the committee. It will, if approved, be signed by the leader of the council and the chief executive.
9. An action plan is incorporated within the governance statement and progress reports will be brought to the committee during the forthcoming year.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The Code of Corporate Governance is a key component of the council’s commitment to sound financial systems and practices. The Annual Governance Statement is an important requirement within the Code.
Legal	The preparation of a code of governance and an annual governance statement complying with the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance is effectively a legal requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
Community Safety	No implications
Human Rights and Equalities	No implications
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	Good risk management is crucial to proper corporate governance, as the code and the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance make clear.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS
The Annual Governance Statement is prepared annually for consideration by the committee and its Action Plan is monitored throughout the year by the Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS REVELANT TO THIS ITEM		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Fylde Code of Corporate Governance	2017	Town Hall, St Annes
Directorate assurance statements	2023/24	Town Hall, St Annes

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Tracy Manning	tracy.manning@fylde.gov.uk Tel 658521	8 May 2024

Attached documents
Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement