



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Governance and Audit Committee

Tuesday, 16 July 2024

Report of Councillor Philip Knowles,
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide Governance and Audit Committee an opportunity to review the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, attached at Appendix A, ahead of its inclusion within the Statement of Accounts.

Recommendations

That the Committee considers the contents of the report and provides feedback on the Draft Annual Governance Statement attached at Appendix A.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any
exempt or confidential
information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities?

Effective council

Which wards are impacted?

(All Wards);

1 Implications

- 1.1 Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 There are no further legal or governance implications that are not already covered in the body of the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory document that is required to be produced in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Failure to produce an Annual Governance Statement would result in the Council being in breach of its statutory obligations.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer

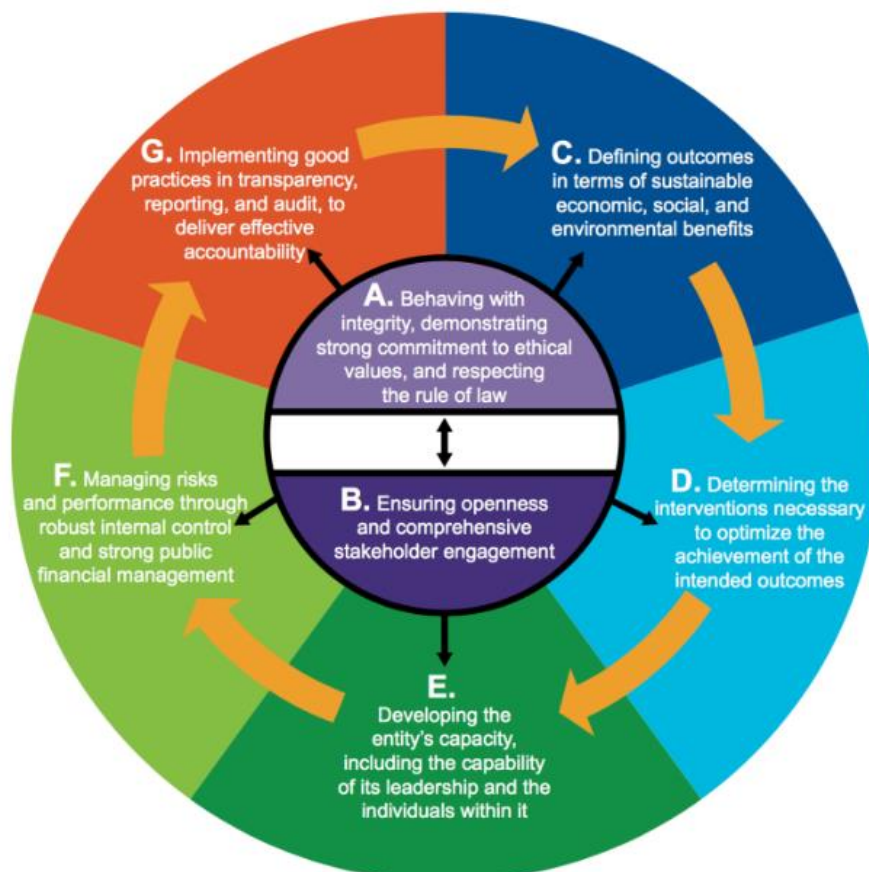
2 Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 Regulation 6(1)(a) requires an authority to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare a statement on the review with any published Statement of Accounts – this is known as the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.2 On an annual basis the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive publish an Annual Governance Statement that:
- assesses how the Council has complied with the Local Code of Corporate Governance, which has been produced in accordance with the principles and requirements contained within the framework established by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in the publication, Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016 Edition) – further information below in 2.3
 - provides an opinion of the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements
 - provides details of how continual improvement in the systems of governance will be achieved

2.3 The 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework' sets the standard for local authority governance in the UK. The concept underpinning the Framework is to support local government in taking responsibility for developing and shaping an informed approach to governance, aimed at achieving the highest standards in a measured and proportionate way. The purpose of the Framework is to assist authorities individually in reviewing and accounting for their own unique approach, with the overall aim to ensure that:

- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities
- there is sound and inclusive decision making
- there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities

2.4 The Framework sets out seven core principles of governance as detailed in the diagram below, and illustrates that good governance is dynamic and involves continuous evaluation and review:



The Framework is applied when compiling the Annual Governance Statement with the Council providing assurances over its governance arrangements, together with identifying areas of future focus and improvement.

2.5 The Draft Annual Governance Statement, attached at Appendix A, consists of:

- Foreword from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive
- Key elements of the Council's Governance Framework 2023/24
- How the Council has complied with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework
- Governance Framework for 2023/24
- Review of Effectiveness
- Assurance Statement Review
- Governance key area of focus for 2024/25

2.6 The 'Governance key area of focus for 2024/25' will be the delivery of:

- East Midlands Councillor Development Charter
- Little Ponton and Stroxton Community Governance Review
- Review of the Officer Code of Conduct
- Lead officer established, who is an Accredited Counter Fraud Specialist, to investigate all whistleblowing reports
- Lessons learnt report to be produced at the end of each key event/project
- Use of data (Oflog, Government, benchmarking) to be used to assist in decision making
- Lesson learnt review on complaints to stop reoccurrences
- Investment in technology – Asset Management system and Financial System
- Leisure Option Appraisal

3 Reasons for the Recommendations

3.1 Members are required to ensure the draft Annual Governance Statement adequately reflects the financial year 2023/24 and that it sufficiently portrays the overall governance framework for the Council. This is a requirement of Regulation 6(1)(b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to prepare an annual governance statement.

4 Appendices

4.1 Appendix A – Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24