

To: Chair of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee  
From: Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Place and Sustainability  
Ref: Annual Governance Statement - 2024/25  
Date: 16/4/25  
cc: Chief Executive

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ASSURANCE STATEMENT**

The Council's Code of Corporate Governance illustrates how the Council is governed as a corporate body. On an annual basis the Council is required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement, which reports the extent to which the Council has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance for the financial year in question, as part of its Annual Financial Statement.

The Executive Director Assurance Statement is a key element of evidence to illustrate the degree of compliance with the Code of Governance.

## **ASSURANCE STATEMENT**

I confirm the following points to the Chair of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee:

- I understand the requirements of my job as set out in my contract of employment and my job description.
- I have made a Declaration of Private Interests as required by the Code of Conduct for any paid or unpaid private work or consultancy, or any potential conflict of interests relating to my work at the Council.
- I am aware of the principal statutory obligations and key priorities of the Council which impact on the services for which I am responsible and have actively communicated these to staff within my Directorate. I have made an assessment of the significant risks to the successful discharge of the Council's key outcomes and my service outcomes and have identified the appropriate controls to cost effectively mitigate these risks.

- I acknowledge that one of my managerial tasks is to develop, maintain and operate effective control systems to manage risk in all areas for which I have responsibility. I confirm that I understand what this involves and that I have the necessary authority to establish and operate such controls effectively.

I have obtained assurance from my service directors on the key elements of risk and control systems for which I am responsible and I am satisfied that they:

- have met their responsibilities to identify and manage areas of high risk.
- have ensured control systems are operating effectively having taken action to address control weaknesses.
- are empowered to operate such control procedures.
- are aware of their responsibility to report upwards any unresolved matters of concern about the management of risk and to deal with any risk matters reported to them in an expeditious manner.
- have made Declarations of Private Interests as required by the Code of Conduct for any paid or unpaid private work or consultancy, or any potential conflict of interests relating to their work at the Council.
- are familiar with the Council's policy on whistleblowing which enables them to bypass intermediate levels of management without fear of victimisation, and
- have up to date business continuity plans in place for all the services they are responsible for.

I confirm that all significant internal control matters brought to my attention by staff, Internal Audit and Risk Management, External Audit or external regulators have been or are being properly dealt with.

Throughout the financial year 2024/25 I consider that the risks and internal controls for which I am responsible have been sufficiently addressed in order to provide reasonable assurance of effective financial and operational control, compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and with other laws and regulations. To the best of my knowledge, these arrangements have been complied with in all material respects throughout the period.

I am not aware of any significant weaknesses in internal control or non-compliance with Council policies or procedures, including any relating from any change in business practice in my area of responsibility, or other irregularities in accounting practice which should be brought to your attention.

I confirm that any future plans will be assessed for their risks and internal control implications and that sufficient control will be put in place before such plans are implemented.

**Any exceptions to the above are set out below:**

- Historic procurement breaches in relation to the external advice relating to legal matters for the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway were identified by a previous internal audit exercise. Further a separate procurement breach has been identified in relation to the installation of lighting on the busway. Arrangements have been put in place so that the current arrangements are in compliance with the procurement rules and the breaches will be formally reported to the Assets and Procurement Committee in June 2025.

**I detail below any significant governance issues<sup>1</sup> I am aware of, and the action being undertaken to address these:**

- *Busway A* revised Health and Safety Assurance framework has been put in place in relation to the Guided Busway and this is being monitored personally by myself on a weekly basis. This is to reduce and manage the ongoing risks associated with Health and Safety on this infrastructure.
- *Waste PFI review* the current Waste Disposal arrangements and the current waste PFI contract has been reviewed to consider the best option to address the current issue where the facilities provided through the PFI Contract are unable to be used as they do not meet the required environmental and emissions requirements. A detailed assessment of options has been undertaken and reports have been presented to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee which have outlined a proposed solution that will enable the current costs and risks to be effectively managed. The affordability and deliverability of the options continues to be assessed based on commercial discussions with the PFI provider and through discussions with MHCLG. Reports will continue to be provided to the Committee on the progress of this review in 25/26

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. Significant governance issues are defined as those which:

- Seriously prejudice or prevent achievement of a principal objective of the authority;
- Have resulted in the need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved, or has resulted in significant diversion of resources from another aspect of the business;
- Have led to a material impact on the accounts;
- The Audit Committee advises should be considered significant for this purpose;
- The Head of Internal Audit reports on as significant in the annual opinion on the internal control environment;
- Have attracted significant public interest or have seriously damaged the reputation of the organisation;
- Have resulted in formal action being undertaken by the Chief Financial Officer and / or the Monitoring Officer

**In support of the annual assessment of the Council's compliance with its Code of Corporate Governance, I detail below any reflections and comments on the Council's current governance arrangements, against the seven characteristics of governance within the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny's [Governance Risk & Resilience Framework](#):**

**1. Extent of recognition of individual and collective responsibility for good governance.**

The overall governance arrangements within the Council provide good assurance in regard to this through the structure of directorate management teams, corporate leadership team, statutory officer reviews and appropriate reporting to Committees

**2. Awareness of political dynamics.**

All senior managers at ELT level have had specific training on political management and awareness, this planned to be further rolled out within the directorate to Head of Service Level in 25/26.

**3. How the Council looks to the future to set its decision-making priorities.**

Effective arrangements are in place through the Strategic Framework, Business Plan, Vision and Ambitions which sets the overall strategic long term direction. This is supported in the directorate with the production of Service Plans and a Directorate Core Purpose document

**4. Officer and Councillor roles.**

The Directorate has structured, documented and clear arrangements in relation to briefings and advice for Chairs, Vice Chairs, Spokes and Committees in which the clarity of decision making and responsibility is provided.

**5. How the Council's real situation compares to its sense of itself.**

There is honest and realistic assessment of the Council's position in relation to risk and financial control and informs its future strategy based on feedback through the quality of life survey, complaints and feedback.

**6. Quality of local (external) relationships.**

The directorate leads and sustains effective partnership working with the key stakeholder most notably the Combined Authority, District Councils and regional partners

**7. The state of member oversight through scrutiny and audit committees**

The council's committee structure does provide effective oversight of key areas of delivery for the Council but the scrutiny role they play could be further enhanced.

**I also detail any actions which have been completed in 2024/25 or which are planned for 2025/26 to strengthen the Council's systems of governance against the seven characteristics noted above.**

I attach the Assurance action plan which will be monitored on a monthly basis through the directorate management team

**SIGNATURE:**

**DATE: 16/4/25**