

Crawley Borough Council

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Introduction & Scope of Responsibility

Crawley Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) require the Council to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) reporting on the review with the Statement of Accounts.

The Council has approved and adopted a [Code of Corporate Governance](#) which is consistent with the principles of, and reflects the requirements outlined in, the 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. The Code was reviewed by the Head of Governance, People & Performance in October 2022 and no changes were made as it was still fit for purpose. This document is on the Council's website under the "[Supporting Information](#)" section which sits outside the main Constitution document.

The Leader of the Council (Cllr Lamb until May 22 and then Cllr Jones) and the Chief Executive (Natalie Brahma-Pearl) both recognise the importance of having a71 -[Ch)10.-0.002 T8.002.7 (n)-10.8 (e

The purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled, and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its

corruption and dishonesty and recommends procedures for dealing with actual or expected fraud. The Team also prosecutes, where appropriate, and is involved in fraud training and awareness.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Transparency

The Council and its decisions are open and accessible to the community, service users, partners and its staff. All reports requiring a decision are considered by appropriately qualified Legal, and Finance staff with expertise in the particular function area before they are progressed to the relevant Committee or group. This Council wants to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in decision-making and applied to everything the Council does. To meet this responsibility, equality impact assessments are carried out when there is significant change to major Council services, functions, projects and policies in order to better understand whether the change will impact people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

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Complaints

Crawley Borough Council is committed to delivering a high-

- ICT Board
- Corporate Projects Assurance Group
- Portfolio Briefings
- Quarterly reporting to CMT
- Quarterly monitoring of complaints by CMT

Going forward the Council will need to respond to key emerging drivers:

- Focus on our Community Needs
- Continuing to deliver efficiencies
- A workforce with the right people, skills and attitudes
- Capacity to respond to wider change agendas both within the sector and more broadly
- Operational resilience reflecting the reduction in funding and need to generate income

Housing Strategy

Housing need and the Council's policies to address this are contained within the Local Plan Housing policies.

discharges its equality duty. An [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan](#) was also produced to support the delivery of these priorities which will be reviewed annually.

Corporate Debt Policy

The Council updated its [Corporate Debt Policy](#) and was agreed by [Cabinet](#) on the 1 February 2023. The Council's approach to debt recovery co-ordinates with its welfare response to support the Council's strategic aims in helping Crawley rapidly recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis.

The Council uses "Lateral" software to enable it to have a shared view of debt across the Council. This system identifies people that are vulnerable and points them to get debt advice to help avoid them getting into further debt.

Local Partnerships

The Council has a key role in a number of local partnerships, working for the benefit of residents and the community to improve the quality of life, including:

- Safer Crawley Partnership - formed in 1998 in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Crawley Wellbeing - a free, friendly and impartial service from the Local Authority, run in partnership with West Sussex County Council and the local NHS.
- Economic / Regeneration Partnerships - Crawley Growth Programme, Crawley Economic Recovery Taskforce/Town Deal Board.
- The Local Community Network (LCN) is a place-based approach to health and wellbeing delivery and aims to share plans, o

Financial Measures

Crawley Borough Council publishes its Annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with CIPFA guidelines and the annual Budget is approved by the Full Council and is monitored and reported upon regularly. The Narrative Report which forms part of the Statement has a series of financial measures. Quarterly monitoring of finance is reported to Cabinet, other financial measures are reported to CMT on a quarterly basis together with other non-financial performance measures.

Consultations

To be effective from 1st October 2019, the following changes will be implemented:

All new staff attend corporate induction sessions and undertake an e-learning induction package. Suitable training is available to support all staff to carry out their roles to the best of their ability. Newly elected Councillors are required to attend an induction which includes information on roles and responsibilities; political management and decision-making; the Code of Conduct, declaration and registration of interests, financial management and processes; information
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'Undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.'

Internal Audit is provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) and fully conform with all requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Council maintained a fully compliant internal audit service in 2022/23. SIAP produced an [Internal Audit Charter 22/23](#) which formally defines the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, and responsibility. This was approved by the Audit Committee on the [15 March 2022](#) and will be updated annually.

The Chief Internal Auditor (Head of SIAP) provides an independent and objective annual opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, risk management, and governance each year and is in accordance with the PSIAS. Progress on the Audit Plan is reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

Audit Committee

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The draft opinion currently states that sufficient assurance work has been carried out to allow the Chief Internal Auditor to form a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment. In their opinion frameworks of governance, risk management and management control are **reasonable** and audit testing has demonstrated controls to be working in practice. Where weaknesses have been identified through internal audit review, SIAP have worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement.