

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>AUDIT PANEL</b>
<b>Date:</b>	16 March 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kathy Roe – Director of Finance Wendy Poole – Head of Risk Management and Audit Services
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20 – IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	To present the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 – Improvement Plan Progress Report to Members for comment.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	The Audit Panel is asked to comment on the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 Improvement Plan Progress Report attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> .
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Demonstrates proper Corporate Governance.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The Governance Statement demonstrates proper compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)</b>	Sound corporate governance and proper systems of internal control are essential for the long-term financial health and reputation of the Council.
<b>Legal Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	The production of the statement and the review of progress against the improvement plan meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	The statement provides assurance that the Council has a sound system of corporate governance in place. It is considered to be an important public expression of how the Council directs and controls its functions and relates to its community.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	The background papers can be obtained from the author of the report, Wendy Poole, Head of Risk Management and Audit Services by:   Telephone: 0161 342 3846  e-mail: <a href="mailto:wendy.poole@tameside.gov.uk">wendy.poole@tameside.gov.uk</a>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement is necessary to meet the requirements set out in Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. It requires authorities to “conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control” and “following the review, the body must approve an annual governance statement prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control”.
- 1.2 The Annual Governance Statement was presented to the Audit Panel on 22 July 2020 as a draft document for review and comment and presented as a final document for approval on 14 November 2020.
- 1.3 The Annual Governance Statement is based on an Assurance Framework which includes:-
  - AGS Self-Assessment Checklists and signed Assurance Statements;
  - Head of Risk Management and Audit’s Annual Report;
  - Annual Review against the Code of Corporate Governance;
  - Medium Term Financial Plan/Budget Report;
  - Review of System of Internal Audit;
  - Annual Audit Letter;
  - Role of the Chief Financial Officer;
  - Role of the Head of Internal Audit;
  - Corporate Plan; and
  - Statutory Inspections.
- 1.4 The Annual Governance Statement details:-
  - Section 1 - Scope of Responsibility;
  - Section 2 - The purpose of the Governance Framework;
  - Section 3 - The Governance Framework;
  - Section 4 - Review of Effectiveness;
  - Section 5 - Level of Assurance; and
  - Section 5 - Conclusion and Signatures

## 2 IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

- 2.1 Section 5 of the Annual Governance Statement identified a number of areas for development which were appended to the statement in an Improvement plan. Addressing the issues identified will further enhance the governance framework in place for the Council.
- 2.2 The Table presented at **Appendix 1** provides a progress report against each development as at February 2021. Some improvements are progressing, however, COVID-19 has caused delays to a number of the improvements identified.

## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As set out on the front of the report.