

# Informal Joint Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath  
District Council

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>West Suffolk Annual Governance Statement 2018/2019</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PAS/FH/19/001</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	31 January 2019
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Councillor Stephen Edwards Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance <b>Tel:</b> 01799 530325 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk">stephen.edwards@forest-heath.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Greg Stevenson Service Manager (Finance and Performance) <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757264 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Gregory.stevenson@westsuffolk.gov.uk">Gregory.stevenson@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present for approval the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 which has been produced following completion of the annual review of the councils' governance arrangements.	

<b>Recommendation:</b>		<b>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:</b>	
		<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</b></p> <p><b>(1) The Committee <u>approves</u> the Draft 2018/2019 Annual Governance Statement for signing by the Chief Executive and Leader</b></p> <p><b>(2) The Committee authorises the Service Manager (Finance and Performance), in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources to make any necessary changes to the approved Annual Governance Statement, to take into account any unexpected and significant governance issues arising between the date of this Committee and 31 March 2019</b></p>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i>	
<i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>		Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Consultation:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This report has been prepared in consultation with the Leadership Team.</li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
<i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)

Failure to regularly monitor and improve the councils' governance arrangements could weaken corporate governance, impacting on service delivery.	Medium*	The statement is fully supported by relevant documentation and evidence.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		N/A	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix A</b> – Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018/2019	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation**

### **1.1 Background Information**

- 1.1.1 Both West Suffolk councils are responsible for ensuring that their 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.
- 1.1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the councils are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of their affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of their functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.1.3 The Annual Governance Statement provides stakeholders with assurance that the councils have operated within the law and that they have met the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The Annual Governance Statement accompanies the Statement of Accounts.
- 1.1.4 A copy of the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 is attached to this report, at **Appendix A**. The document has been prepared by the Officer Governance Group and is presented as a joint statement for St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Forest Heath District Council to reflect both councils working together and sharing services across West Suffolk.
- 1.1.5 A key function of the councils' Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees is to review and approve the draft Annual Governance Statement prior to it being signed by the Chief Executive and Leaders of the councils.
- 1.1.6 The Secretary of State has issued a set of regulations that makes arrangements for the transfer of functions and responsibilities from Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils to West Suffolk Council. These regulations, the Local Government (Boundary Change) Regulations 2018, require that Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury approve an Annual Governance Statement for the year 2018/19 prior to the date of reorganisation that is by 31 March 2019. The timetable for approval has therefore necessarily been brought forward to achieve this; however, the Annual Governance Statement should include all relevant factors up to the end of the year. We have therefore recommended that the Service Manager – Finance and Performance is authorised (subject to consultation) to make changes to the approved Annual Governance Statement arising from any unexpected and significant governance issues between the date of this Committee and 31 March 2019.