

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	23 June 2025
Title of Report	Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore - Finance, People & Transformation (Deputy Leader)
Report Author	Executive Director (Section 151 Officer)
Strategic Themes	All Themes: Enabling communities and supporting vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report sets out the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25. The Annual Governance Statement provides a review of the Council's governance arrangements that were in place for 2024/25 and also puts forward an assurance table and actions to further improve the Council's governance arrangements for 2025/26 for consideration and approval.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 That the Annual Governance statement in respect of 2024/25 financial year, as attached to this report, be approved.
- 2.2 That delegated authority is given to the Executive Director (S151 Officer) in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to make amendments to the Annual Governance Statement following feedback from the External Auditors.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 It is a requirement of the Account and Audit Regulations 2015 for the local authority to prepare and approve an Annual Governance Statement.

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| 3.2 | It may be necessary to make amendments or additions to the Annual Governance Statement following feedback from the External Auditors as they review and audit the Council's Statutory Accounts. |
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4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

Local government bodies 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. The development of the Annual Governance Statement helps to ensure proper arrangements are in place to meet that responsibility.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations set out the statutory framework for the financial management of local authorities and incorporate the requirements for compliance with proper accounting practices. Within the context of the statutory framework the production of an "Annual Governance Statement" has been assigned "proper practice" status.

The statement should be consistent with the principles of good governance set out in Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (Governance Framework) (CIPFA and Solace, 2016). The statement includes the result of a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and provides assurance on whether the authority's governance arrangements are fit for purpose.

An addendum to this guidance has been published in May 2025, and is the first update of the guidance since 2016. The addendum replaces the chapter relating to the annual review and reporting of the governance arrangements; the seven principles of good governance remain unchanged.

Whilst the contents of the addendum are for application to the annual governance statements for 2025/26 onwards, its contents have been considered when drafting this year's statement.

The Council undertakes an annual review of its governance arrangement to ensure continuing compliance with best practice as set out in the guidance.

The governance statement itself allows authorities to report publicly on the extent to which they have complied with their own code, on an annual basis, including how they have monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year and on any planned changes in the coming period. English local authorities are required to publish the statement each year.

In 2017 the Cabinet Executive approved and adopted an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance together with the associated reporting

arrangements in relation to governance to ensure that best practice be adhered to. This is detailed at Appendix B and was updated to comply with the 2016 Edition of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and Solace “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework”.

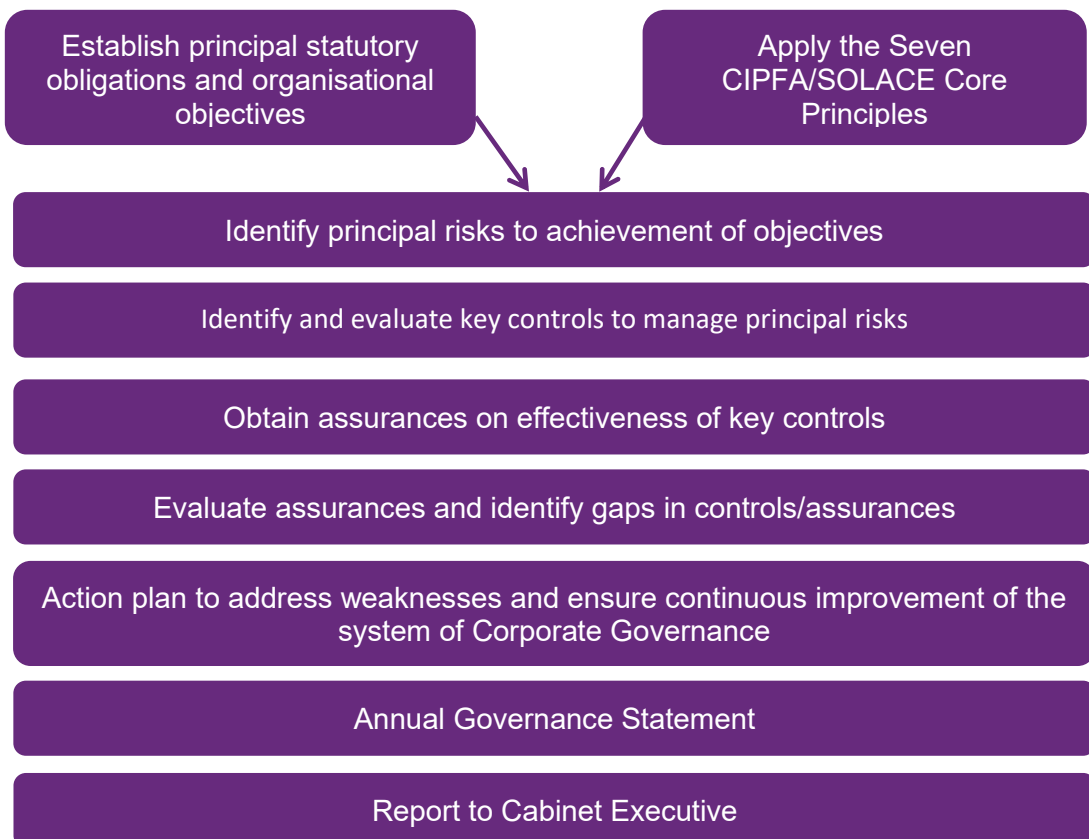
The Local Code of Corporate Governance has been reviewed again this year; it is felt that it is still fit for purpose and needs no further amendment.

4.2 Proposal(s)

A review of the systems of governance in respect of 2024/25 financial year has been carried out and the findings summarised in the review of effectiveness section of the Annual Governance Statement.

The assurance review is attached at Appendix C and identifies examples of assurances in respect of those governance arrangements which are key to mitigate against significant risks to the achievement of the corporate objectives of the Council. Areas where further improvements can be made can be identified from the analysis. The chart overleaf sets out the annual governance review framework adopted by the Council.

Review of Annual Governance Statement and the Assurance Gathering Process



4.3 Relevant Consultations

Members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Senior Internal Auditor have been consulted during the process of carrying out the internal corporate assurance review.

The results from the review, set out in the Annual Governance Statement at Appendix A, has confirmed that the Council's governance arrangements and internal control environment remain sound. There are no governance matters of significant concern which require further immediate action.

External Auditors Review

The external audit of the draft statement of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025 has not yet been completed by our external auditors Azets UK. There is therefore no opinion available to include within this report.

4.4 Significant Issues

None

4.5 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities and there are no areas of concern.

5. Environmental impact

5.1 No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

6. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

7.1 There are no risks associated with this report. The reporting of the Annual Governance Statement itself assists in reducing risk across the Council.

8. Other options considered

8.1 The option to not produce a separate report on the Annual Governance Statement for the Cabinet Executive was dismissed given it is of utmost importance that the Cabinet Executive are fully informed and assured by the completion of the Corporate Assurance Review and the production of the Governance Statement.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – Annual Governance Statement
- 9.2 Appendix B – Local Code of Corporate Governance
- 9.3 Appendix C – Assurance and Evidence Matrix

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1
- Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework – CIPFA/SOLACE 2016
 - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Guidance Notes for English Authorities CIPFA/SOLACE 2016
 - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework Addendum – CIPFA/SOLACE May 2025

11. Report author's contact details

Sarah Pennelli Executive Director (S151 Officer)
Sarah.Pennelli@Blaby.gov.uk 0116 272 7650