



Subject:	Belfast City Council's Assurance Framework and Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18
Date:	22 June 2018
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance and Resources,
Contact Officer:	Andy Harrison, Head of AGRS

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this paper is twofold;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to explain to Members the key elements of the 'year-end' process and the 'assurance framework' that the Council has developed over recent years to help ensure that the Council complies with statutory requirements and Members and senior officers can have effective, ongoing oversight of the Council's governance and assurance arrangements.• to present the Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18, for consideration and inclusion in the unaudited statement of accounts which will be certified by the Chief Financial Officer by 30 June 2018 and then subject to NIAO audit. The Statement has been considered by the Audit & Risk Panel but must be approved by the Committee Chair, the Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer.

1.2	<p>The Annual Governance Statement is an important document and it is important that the Committee is fully aware of its contents. The disclosures in the statement are based upon the Council’s corporate risk register and take into consideration the disclosures made by Chief Officers in their individual annual assurance statements. The Annual Governance Statement also incorporates a summary of the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Service’s annual assurance statement.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committees is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the Council’s Assurance Framework, illustrated and described at Appendix 1. • Review and approve the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18 and, in particular, the disclosure of the significant governance issues contained in the statement. See Appendix 2. • Following review, the statement will be incorporated into the Council’s unaudited financial statements for 2017/18 which will be certified by the Chief Financial Officer by 30 June 2018. It will be subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Council’s Assurance Framework is summarised at Appendix 1. It shows how different sources of assurance and related key elements / control measures combine to enable the Council to monitor its governance arrangements and produce the evidence to support its Annual Governance Statement. The diagram shows how the Council’s Audit & Risk Panel, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and Council provide oversight of these governance arrangements.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Preparation of Annual Governance Statement</u></p> <p>The Council has a statutory responsibility to annually prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement as part of the Financial Report. Many different processes inform the preparation of the Statement as can be seen from the Assurance Framework at Appendix 1. Specifically, the Annual Governance Statement sets out:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ scope of the responsibility of the Council in relation to governance ▪ the purpose of the governance framework ▪ the governance framework that is actually in place ▪ the review of effectiveness of the governance framework that has taken place ▪ an update on the significant governance issues disclosed at year-end 2017 ▪ significant governance issues to be disclosed for year-end 2018 and action proposed to address them.
3.3	The Statement for 2017/18 is presented at Appendix 2 and should be approved by the Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources.
3.4	It will be incorporated into the unaudited statement of accounts which will be certified by the Chief Financial Officer by 30 June 2018. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.
3.5	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Council’s Assurance Framework</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Annual Governance Statement for Council for 2017/18</p>