

Meeting: Audit Committee

Date: 8 September 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The preparation of the Annual Governance Statement provides the opportunity for the organisation to review its processes, controls and objectives and to provide assurance to Members, Senior Officers and stakeholders as to the reliability of its Statement of Accounts and the probity of its operations.
- 1.2 The Annual Governance Statement fulfils the statutory requirement in England for a local authority to conduct a review at least once in each financial year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to include a statement reporting on the review with its Statement of Accounts.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1. The proposals in this report help us to deliver our vision of a healthy, happy, and prosperous Torbay by setting out publicly the extent to which the Council complies with its own code of corporate governance (part of the codes and protocols of the Constitution), including how it monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year.
- 2.2 The reason for the decision is to meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/2024 be agreed, be included in the draft Statement of Accounts and forwarded to the External Auditors for comment.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025

Supporting Information

5. Introduction

- 5.1 The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025 has been prepared and, if agreed by Audit Committee, will be sent to External Auditors with the Annual Statement of Accounts for comment to be finally approved by Audit Committee later in the year.
- 5.2 Regulations require every local authority to include in their annual Statement of Accounts an Annual Governance Statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. CIPFA set out how the format that each Annual Governance Statement should follow.
- 5.3 The draft Statement was considered by the Audit Committee in May 2025 and the following was agreed:
- That the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit Committee and Group Leaders, review the draft Annual Governance Statement to more accurately reflect:
- 1) the group arrangements;
 - 2) the recommendations and opinion of External and Internal Audit and the responses to those recommendations and opinion;
 - 3) the completed action being removed; and
 - 4) references to the Devon Assurance Partnership being standardised throughout.

The attached draft Statement highlights the changes which have been made and shared, by the Director of Corporate Services, with the Chairman of the Audit Committee and Group Leaders. Any feedback from those members will be reported at the Committee.

6. Options under consideration

- 6.1. Not applicable

7. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 7.1. There are no financial commitments to the council beyond the officer time involved in collating this report.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require an authority to conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with any published Statement of Accounts.

9. Engagement and Consultation

- 9.1. The Statement is prepared with information from Officers, Senior Officers and Internal Audit reports. It has been reviewed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

10. Procurement Implications

- 10.1. Not applicable

11. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 11.1. Not applicable

12. Associated Risks

- 12.1 That the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations are not adequately met.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	There is no differential impact.		
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	There is no differential impact.		
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities	There is no differential impact.		

	were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.			
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	There is no differential impact.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	There is no differential impact.		
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	There is no differential impact.		

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	There is no differential impact.		
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	There is no differential impact.		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	There is no differential impact.		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	There is no differential impact.		
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population	There is no differential impact.		

	have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		There is no differential impact.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		There is no differential impact.		
Human Rights impacts		There is no differential impact.		
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	There is no differential impact.		

14. Cumulative Council Impact

14.1. None

15. Cumulative Community Impacts

15.1. None