



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES**

**to
PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
7 MARCH 2024**

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2023 / 24 for review and adoption.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the Committee approve the Annual Governance Statement (**APPENDIX A**) and that this is appended to the Statement of Accounts;
- (ii) That Performance, Governance and Audit Committee (PGA) monitor the progress of the action plan identified in the AGS through a quarterly report.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The AGS for Maldon District Council was re-designed according to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice in 2020, and this is the fourth version since.
- 3.2 In this version (23 / 24) we also analyse ourselves against the CIPFA Financial Management code Standard C 'The leadership team demonstrates in its actions and behaviours responsibility for governance and internal control' – which was identified by the Local Government Association (LGA) finance peer review as a possible improvement action for the Council.
- 3.3 The statement reviews the criteria for good governance and the activity that has taken place within these criteria over the 2023 / 24 financial year, as well as including the internal audit statement / review of the year.
- 3.4 The document also highlights areas whether further improvements could be made to improve governance and build best practice, and this is set out in the action plan proposed for 2024 / 25.
- 3.5 The AGS is provided separately to the statement of accounts to recognise the importance of the document and information set out in supporting our governance arrangements, which underpin the way our financial reporting is produced. If the draft is approved by the Committee this will then be appended to the Statement of Accounts.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The draft AGS is provided for Committee review and adoption, and comments on our Governance arrangements for 2023 / 24, and the plans for improving these in 2024 / 25.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 Smarter finances

- 5.1.1 A strengthened approach to governance will underpin more robust challenge on performance of the Corporate Plan.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The report gives viability to our residents around our governance arrangements and supports openness and transparency.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk (including Fraud implications)** – Good governance includes good risk management and fraud awareness and comment on these areas is included in the AGS.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – This document is appended to the statement of accounts and contributes to financial reporting.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to:

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