



REPORT of CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**to
PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
12 MARCH 2026**

2025/26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2025/26 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 the 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 analyses Maldon District Council's governance arrangements for 2025/26 against Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice, this is also the second version where we include analysis against 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.
- 3.2 The AGS reviews the criteria for good governance and the activity that has taken place within these criteria over the 2025/26 financial year, as well as including the internal audit statement / review of the year.
- 3.3 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 2026/27. An action that rolled over from 25/26 but has been removed in this version is 'Draw out and link all of our policies and their objectives through a review of the Local Development Plan (LDP) (e.g., corporate plan, climate change)' This is because we are unlikely to pursue a Local Plan under the old system as we would not meet the Government's deadline. The decisions around this will be coming back to Council in due course.
- 3.4 Overall, there are no significant governance concerns and there have been improvements within the year, as highlighted in the report.
- 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.

- 3.6 To meet committee timetables, this report has been brought forward before the conclusion of the financial year. Officers do not anticipate significant governance changes between now and the end of March 2025, but if there are any, a revised version of the document will also be brought forward accordingly.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The draft AGS is provided for Committee review and adoption, and comments on our Governance arrangements for 2025/26, and the plans for improving these in 2026/27.

5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2025 - 2028

- 5.1 None.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The report gives visibility 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.
- (vi) **Impact on Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation** – The impact of LGR and governance arrangements is included in the commentary of the report.

Background Papers: None.

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