

## ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2022

### 1. Scope of responsibility

- 1.1. Chelmsford City Council ('the Council') has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements that ensure continuous improvement in the way it works in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This includes a responsibility to ensure that Council business is conducted in accordance with the law and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.
- 1.2. To fulfil this responsibility, the Council must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and carrying out its functions, which includes arrangements for managing risk.
- 1.3. The Council has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance which is consistent with the seven principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016*.
- 1.4. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code. It also meets the requirements of Regulation 6 (Part 2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement. In line with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework, this statement is "an open and honest self-assessment", which:
  - describes key elements of the Council's governance arrangements, covering key corporate systems and the range of activities for which the Council is responsible;
  - describes processes applied in reviewing their effectiveness, and
  - lists actions proposed to deal with significant governance issues identified.

### 2. The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1. The governance framework comprises:
  - the systems, policies, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled; and
  - the Council's activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community.
- 2.2. The framework enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 2.3. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to: identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives; evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and manage those risks efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.4. The governance framework outlined in this document has been in place at Chelmsford Council for the year ended 31 March 2022.

### 3. The Governance Framework

- 3.1. The Council's Governance Framework has been set up over successive years and is reviewed annually to ensure its continuing effectiveness regarding the seven CIPFA/SOLACE principles of delivering good governance (as updated in 2016).
- 3.2. Key highlights from the Governance Framework in place at Chelmsford City Council are shown against each of the seven principles below. Further evidence of compliance with the principles can be found in the Code of Corporate Governance.

Good Governance Principle	Chelmsford Council Key Elements 2021/22
<p><b>Principle A</b></p> <p><b>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Member and Officer Code of Conduct form part of the Council's <a href="#">Constitution</a>. The Model Member Code of Conduct was published in December 2020 and the review of the Council's Member Code of Conduct was undertaken during 2020/21. Some amendments were made to the Member Code of Conduct at Full Council in July 2021 to bring it in line with the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The Council decided not to adopt the full LGA model code at that time. It was intended to review this further at a later stage particularly once the guidance to the model code had been considered further. (see further paragraph 3.9). A further review of the Officer Code of Conduct will follow the final decision as to the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct during 2022/23.</li> <li>✓ The Council refreshed its officer performance appraisal process in line with its corporate values and behaviours and OurConversations was launched in April 2021 with its primary focus to encourage more frequent forward-thinking dialogue between managers and employees.</li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Governance Committee</a> continues to monitor complaints and investigations under the Standards regime.</li> <li>✓ Policies and procedures on Member and Officer declarations of interests and of gifts and hospitality are available, with interests remaining a standing item on all Committee, Cabinet and full Council meeting agendas. Governance Committee has agreed that gifts and hospitality received by members will be published on the website with quarterly updates.</li> <li>✓ The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy brings together anti-bribery, anti-money laundering and the fraud response plan.</li> </ul>

Good Governance Principle	Chelmsford Council Key Elements 2021/22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The whistleblowing policy is available to staff, key stakeholders and the general public <a href="#">via the Council's website</a>. <a href="#">Service-related complaints</a> and <a href="#">complaints about a Councillor</a> can also be reported online.</li> <li>✓ The <a href="#">Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement</a> sets out the actions to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to our services and puts in place steps to eliminate acts of modern slavery and human trafficking in the Council's services, businesses and supply chains.</li> <li>✓ The Council has a responsibility to ensure that all commissioning and procurement supports the Council's Our Chelmsford Our Plan principles within the legislative framework for public procurement and the Council's own internal rules and procedures, as well as promoting sustainable and ethical sourcing, procurement, commissioning and contract management wherever possible. This is set out in the Council's <a href="#">Social Value Procurement Policy and Strategy 2020-25</a>.</li> <li>✓ The <a href="#">Articles of the Constitution</a>, define the Monitoring Officer's role to ensure that all decisions comply with statutory requirements and are lawful.</li> <li>✓ Ethical Governance and Decision-Making awareness for Councillors Training was delayed due to Covid-19 but was completed in November 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle B</b>  <b>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Council has an FOI <a href="#">publication scheme</a> (this was updated in 2021) on its website and also publishes <a href="#">certain information</a> in line with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. The Council also updates its FOI requests relating to Business Rates <a href="#">quarterly</a>.</li> <li>✓ The Council's Annual Statement of Accounts is <a href="#">published online</a>.</li> <li>✓ Comprehensive <a href="#">Council Tax information is available online</a> and was updated in 2020/21 to provide additional explanation of the Special Expenses mechanism, following a review during the year.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Council, Cabinet and committee meetings are open to the public and guidance on attending and speaking at public meetings is available <a href="#">online</a>. As a result of Covid-19, local authorities were permitted to hold virtual meetings under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. Remote council meetings generally worked well and secured good attendance levels to enable democratic decision making to continue and increased public engagement levels. Following the court ruling in 2021 that the legal power to hold remote meetings had lapsed, the Council made appropriate arrangements to resume in person committee meetings where formal decisions by a committee were necessary. Should Parliament re-enable remote meetings the Council will further review its position and consider returning to remote meetings. (see also paragraph 3.9)</li> <li>✓ A <a href="#">calendar of meetings</a> ensures that timely reports are submitted to, <a href="#">published</a> by and distributed by Legal and Democratic Services to ensure Members' information needs, and relevant statutory deadlines, are met.</li> <li>✓ A full record of decisions made in, and supporting material presented to, Committees, Cabinet and full Council is <a href="#">published online</a>.</li> <li>✓ Notices of Key Decisions, Executive Decisions and Urgent Decisions are also issued in advance/made available <a href="#">online</a> (as appropriate).</li> <li>✓ Further detail on stakeholder engagement is available in the <a href="#">Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy</a>.</li> <li>✓ The Monitoring Officer continues to provide guidance for Parish Councils on the standards regime.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle C</b>  <b>Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic,</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Council's <a href="#">Local Plan</a> was adopted on 27 May 2020. This sets out sustainable development objectives, policies and a Spatial Strategy in the period to 2036. In accordance with the Local Plan, masterplans are being prepared for the strategic development sites. Further masterplans for <a href="#">strategic sites at East Chelmsford</a> have been prepared, consulted upon and approved in the</li> </ul>

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<p><b>social and environmental benefits</b></p>	<p>period up to 31 March 2022. Cabinet approved an update to the Council’s Local Development Scheme on 16 November 2021. This sets out the timetable and process for the review of the adopted Local Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ In order for the Council to keep its CIL Governance arrangements up to date and in line with the adopted Local Plan, a revised arrangement was adopted by Cabinet in June 2021. A further review will be carried out within the next 2 years, or earlier should Government legislation make that necessary.</li> <li>✓ Cabinet (June 2021) also approved a restructure of the community grants budget and a move to a commissioning model to provide an improved long term grants provision for a wide selection of groups within the community, which will also provide value for the Council in delivering Our Chelmsford Our Plan deliverables within the support of third sector stakeholders.</li> <li>✓ The Council commenced a broadly scoped city-wide Community Governance Review in December 2020. Following initial consultation, the Council devised draft recommendations which were then subject to further consultation before Final Recommendations were approved at Full Council in March 2022. The Council will be implementing the Final Recommendations during 2022/23.</li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Our Chelmsford, Our Plan</a> is available online setting out the Council’s medium-term strategic priorities to improve the lives of residents, focussing on sustainable economic, social and environmental goals, aligned to the Local Plan where appropriate.</li> <li>✓ The Council’s strategic planning framework ensures that operational activities link to Our Chelmsford, Our Plan priorities. The Our Plan Action Plan breaks down strategic actions to measurable economic, social and environmental outcomes for monitoring through TechnologyOne (OneCouncil). TechOne Action Plans are also in place for the Climate and Ecological Emergency and the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</li> </ul>

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	<p>✓ In June 2021, Cabinet approved the creation of the Greener Chelmsford Grant Scheme which would support “green” community initiatives to help local groups deliver elements of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.</p> <p>✓ The Council in response to a Notice of Motion - Standing Against Racism and Discrimination, resolved to adopt the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia; continue focus groups and meetings to find out more about how we support our diverse communities and expectations of the Council as a whole; improve knowledge and understanding by using our museums, theatres, festivals and outside events to showcase the diversity of our city; monitor the figures relating to hate crimes and action taken via the Community Safety Partnership; support the work of the Working Group on Connectivity and Local Democracy to tackle discrimination, encourage participation and open up community discussion and; report back regularly to all councillors. In 2021, the Council also adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The Council’s activities in this field are monitored by the Anti-Racism Working Group.</p> <p>✓ In line with the <a href="#">Public Sector Equality Duty</a>, the Council’s Equalities Impact Assessment regime has been strengthened to ensure fair access to services.</p>
<p><b>Principle D</b>  <b>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b></p>	<p>✓ Directors meet regularly with both their Cabinet Members and the Chief Executive to discuss progress in their respective areas of responsibility.</p> <p>✓ The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-26 details a sustainable funding strategy for the Council, taking account of Our Chelmsford, Our Plan objectives and informing annual budget setting. A detailed and comprehensive MTFS was presented to Cabinet and Council in July 2021, which included scenario planning for the impact of Covid-19 on the Council’s income, the potential level of Government support and the effect on the Council’s level of reserves. This enabled a range of actions to be implemented in response to the pandemic, in order to ensure a robust financial approach to the risks identified. An updated financial forecast was included in the annual budget setting in February 2022.</p>

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	<p>✓ Financial monitoring arrangements ensure that budget information is readily available to a variety of stakeholders to inform decision-making – including senior managers, Management Team and Cabinet Members, alongside formal reporting to Audit and Risk Committee at outturn, mid-year review to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and regular reporting to Cabinet members. During 2021/22, this has continued to be supplemented by external reporting of the financial impact of Covid-19 to MHCLG.</p> <p>✓ The Council committed to undertaking a self-assessment against CIPFA’s new Financial Management Code (FM Code) and producing an action plan to meet any shortfalls. The FM Code is designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. A review has been undertaken by officers and will be reported to Audit and Risk Committee in the summer of 2022.</p> <p>✓ The Council’s Performance is monitored as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A programme of deep-dive performance reviews is presented to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee throughout the year, each review focussing on a specific area of Council activity.</li> <li>• Overall progress in implementing Our Chelmsford, Our Plan Action Plan is reported in annually to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee in November. Key priorities from the Plan have also been identified by portfolio holders for quarterly reporting to the Policy Leadership Team (PLT).</li> <li>• The Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan progress is reported annually to Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Action Plan progress is reported quarterly to Livewell Chelmsford.</li> <li>• Operational PIs continue to be monitored locally.</li> </ul> <p>✓ <a href="#">Chelmsford Policy Board</a> (joint Members and Officer) Working Groups oversee implementation of the dedicated strategies and actions plans, recommending interventions to Cabinet as necessary. The Board receives updates from the Working Groups when there is significant progress to report.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The <a href="#">Chelmsford Policy Board</a> merged two former working groups to form the Housing Working Group, whose workstreams include developing the Council's Housing Strategy and overseeing the delivery of both the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy (HRSS) and the Housing Strategy. Following extensive consultation in the summer of 2021, the <a href="#">Housing Strategy 2022-27</a> was approved by Cabinet on 15 March 2022. <a href="#">Planning Advice Notes</a> on First Homes, Housing Additionality, Open Space, Self and Custom Build Homes, Specialist Residential Accommodation and Wheelchair Homes were also produced and approved in 2021/22. At operational level, HRSS 'Actions and Outcomes' continue to be tracked through departmental meetings.</li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Chelmsford Garden Village Delivery Board</a> is in place to oversee specific elements of the development of proposals for Chelmsford Garden Community.</li> <li>✓ The <a href="#">Chelmsford Community Response Hub</a>, was run in partnership by Chelmsford City Council and Chelmsford Voluntary Service (CVS), providing assistance to vulnerable and self-isolating Chelmsford residents in need of support during the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020. Hundreds of volunteers helped carry out practical tasks including collecting and delivering food and supplies. The CVS has also supported residents with collecting prescriptions, welfare checks, and befriending. The CVS continued running the Community Response Hub during 2021/22 due to ongoing demand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principle E</b></p> <p><b>Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Council's <a href="#">Constitution</a> is available on the Council's website and subject to ongoing review, as overseen by the Constitution Working Group.</li> <li>✓ The Council's Organisational Development Strategy 2020-2022 sets out how the Council will develop and utilise its workforce to meet Our Chelmsford, Our Plan objectives.</li> <li>✓ The Council works to ensure the physical and mental health and wellbeing of its staff through Workplace Health Champions events, Mental Health First Aiders, the Employee Assistance Programme, Wellness action plans and weekly Our News articles.</li> <li>✓ The Council participates in a number of partnerships, including <a href="#">Safer Chelmsford</a>, <a href="#">South Essex Parking</a>, <a href="#">Essex Online</a>, and works closely with Essex County Council on a number of initiatives:</li> </ul>

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	<p>Mid Essex Children's Partnership Board, Essex Safeguarding Adults Board, Mid Essex Alliance and Chelmsford Youth Strategy Group. The Health Protection Board and Strategic Coordinating Group were invoked in 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic and continued throughout 2020/21 but are now being wound down in line with the Government's strategy of Living with Covid.</p>
<p><b>Principle F</b>  <b>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The Council's main Finance System was replaced in November 2020 with T1 (OneCouncil) which is an integrated platform and includes: General Ledger and Budget management; Customer invoicing and debt management; Purchase ordering; Contract and Supplier Management; Risk Management information; and Corporate Plan Action Tracking. A development plan has been approved by Management Team. External audit reviewed the system as part of their year-end accounts work during 2021 and identified no issues.</li> <li>✓ The Council's Risk Management Strategy recognises that risk management is an integral part of Council activities.</li> <li>✓ Central to the risk framework is the identification and management of the Council's Principal Risks, each assigned to a Directorate lead. Quarterly reporting to Management Team and six-monthly reporting to <a href="#">Audit &amp; Risk Committee</a> ensures arrangements are working effectively. This also reflected the impact of Covid-19 on the Principal Risks.</li> <li>✓ The Internal Audit Annual Report to Audit &amp; Risk Committee confirms that an effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained</li> <li>✓ The Council Principal Risks and Internal Audit Plan are aligned the Our Chelmsford, Our Plan objectives</li> <li>✓ Following the independent Cyber Security "posture review" in 2020/21 which assessed the Council's maturity with regards to information and cybersecurity, a vCISO was appointed during 2021/22 to progress recommendations made (see Action Plan Ref. GOV22_2).</li> <li>✓ The Chief Financial Officer makes regular reports to Members on the financial position, budget setting and monitoring, medium-term forecasts, the annual statement of accounts and any other</li> </ul>

Good Governance Principle	Chelmsford Council Key Elements 2021/22
	<p>financial matters as necessary. Financial risks included within the Principal Risk Register are refreshed in the light of changing financial circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The self-assessment against the FM Code, referred to under Principle D, will further support good financial management. The FM Code establishes six principles of good financial management underpinned by financial management standards. The Code also references other CIPFA codes of practice and the principles of good governance as set out in this Annual Governance Statement, enabling its use as a self-assessment tool to ensure good financial management and good governance in its wider sense. Work is underway on the Council's self-assessment (see Action Plan Ref. GOV22_3).</li> <li>✓ The Council's approach to counter-fraud is informed by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (2014) and was assessed by Internal Audit in 2021 using the 2020 Fighting Fraud &amp; Corruption Locally Checklist. The Council also participates in mandatory NFI exercises.</li> <li>✓ Business rates expanded reliefs and emergency grants were provided by the Government to support businesses and organisations during the pandemic. In March 2022, BEIS confirmed that the Council's activities in relation to the first tranche of grants between April 2020 and September 2020 had provided adequate assurance. Government post-payment assurance activities in relation to 8 further grants payable between November 2020 and March 2022 have not yet begun.</li> <li>✓ The Audit &amp; Risk Committee is constituted in line with, and operates with regard to, the CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees and associated Practical Guidance for Local Authorities (2018). Following self-assessment of compliance and training needs analysis with Audit &amp; Risk Committee Members in 2021, training opportunities were provided to Members. A further survey will be issued in April 2022.</li> <li>✓ During 2019/20, the Council's designated Data Protection Officer has coordinated a review of the Council's Information Governance Policy and Data Breach Policy and Procedure, in conjunction with the new policy framework developed by Digital Services to counter cyber risk. Appropriate action has been taken to protect and mitigate the potential impact to the Council and</li> </ul>

Good Governance Principle	Chelmsford Council Key Elements 2021/22
	those whose information is held by it. The Council has established policies for <a href="#">Freedom of Information</a> , <a href="#">Environmental Information</a> and <a href="#">Data Subject requests</a> , and ensures continuous improvement under its GDPR Compliance Action Plan.
<p><b>Principle G</b>  <b>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability</b></p>	<p>✓ As detailed above, a vast array of information is accessible to the general public via the <a href="#">Council's website</a> in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience.</p> <p>✓ The Council's Corporate Governance Group continued to meet regularly during 2021/22 and included reviewing and updating the Annual Governance Statement, reviewing progress against the AGS action plan, collaborating and sharing governance updates and best governance practice from across the Council.</p> <p>✓ The <a href="#">Annual Governance Statement</a> is presented to the Leader and Chief Executive, approved by Joint Audit &amp; Risk and Governance Committee and published alongside the <a href="#">Statement of Accounts</a>.</p> <p>✓ Governance Committee, Audit &amp; Risk Committee, and Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee report annually on their work to full Council.</p> <p>✓ The Annual Internal Audit Report demonstrates that internal audit recommendations inform positive improvement across the Council, as acknowledged on a quarterly basis in the Council's Principal Risk Register.</p>

### Review of effectiveness

3.3. The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by:

- the work of the senior Management Team who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment
- the work of Cabinet and the Committees, including the Audit & Risk Committee, Governance Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- the work of the Corporate Governance Group who provide feedback to Management Team.
- the Internal Audit Annual Report
- comments made by the external auditors and other inspection agencies

3.4. As well as the annual review, the governance and control frameworks are maintained and reviewed by a series of comprehensive processes throughout the year. These include:

- A **robust Internal Audit function** where the planned work is based on identified key risk areas. The Council's Internal Audit Service arrangements conform to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- An **embedded reporting system for internal audit issues** that ensures that senior managers and members are fully briefed on key issues, which includes regular reporting to the Audit & Risk Committee.
- A **risk management process** which ensures the Principal Risks across the Council are captured and reported to Management Team and Members.
- A **comprehensive budget monitoring process** including access for senior managers to live financial information and latest budget forecasts, with quarterly reporting to Management Team and biannual reporting to Cabinet.

3.5. The outcome of the review is presented in 3.10 below, which detail areas for improvement during 2022/23.

### 3.6. Effectiveness of Other Organisations

- The Council acts as lead partner in the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP which carries out the on-street parking enforcement in Chelmsford, Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Maldon and Rochford, on behalf of Essex County Council (ECC), the highways authority, through delegated responsibilities under a Joint Agreement signed by all partner authorities in 2011. Signs and lines maintenance and new TRO's (Traffic Regulation Orders) are also provided by the Partnership. The Partnership has operated successfully, in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA 2004), including timely production of an Annual Report and agreed Business Plan, and generation of a surplus during each year of operation.
- The One Chelmsford Board acts as Chelmsford's Responsible Authorities Group under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which is a statutory function. There are a number of other statutory partners: Chelmsford City Council, Essex Police, ECC, Essex County Fire and Rescue Services, Probation Services and Health (CCG). The current chair is Chelmsford Council's Chief Executive and our member representative is the Leader of Chelmsford Council. The group has a terms of reference and presents a finance report annually.
- The Council does not currently engage in commercial activities through trading subsidiaries or investment vehicles.

### 3.7. Internal Audit Opinion

- The annual opinion categories range from No Assurance, Limited Assurance, Moderate Assurance to Substantial Assurance. The annual opinion given for 2020/21 was Moderate Assurance.
- The work undertaken during 2021/22 has enabled the Audit Services Manager to form a reasonable conclusion on the Council's control framework, risk and governance arrangements. For the year-ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the opinion is that the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's arrangements is *Moderate Assurance* – overall the Council's systems for control, risk and governance are generally adequate with some improvement required. Revision to assurance ratings and residual risks will be closely monitored through follow-ups in 2022/23. Further detail on audit outputs is provided in the Internal Audit Annual Report.

### 3.8. External Audit and Inspectorates

- In the last 20 years the Council has published its accounts in-line with statutory deadlines and had no qualifications made by its external auditor. However, the effectiveness of the external audit process has been weakened by the late completion of audits. For the last two years the audit has taken over a year from the balance sheet date to complete, compared to the government's target of 6 months from year end. This is a national problem and currently it is unclear when the situation will improve.

### 3.9. Review of Actions from 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement

Ref	2020/21 AGS	Action taken in 2021/22 to address the issue
GOV21_1	<p><b>Remote Meetings – EIA/DPIA</b> - Draft assessments already undertaken. Given there is currently no power to hold remote meetings the Council will impact assess current arrangements. Should Parliament legislate to re enable remote meetings and the Council resumes remote meetings its arrangements will be further impact assessed.</p>	<p>Assessments were completed. It is not known whether the Government will legislate to re enable remote committee meetings. In the meantime, the Council has decided that some meetings will generally be held in person and in any meetings where a committee needs to take a formal decision will be held in person. This is usually meetings of Full Council, Cabinet, Planning Committee, Chelmsford Policy Board, Licensing and Regulatory Committee. Other committees that are not taking formal decisions can meet remotely where this is appropriate. The main meetings which have most public interest are usually webcast where appropriate.</p>
GOV21_2	<p><b>Member Code of Conduct</b> - Consideration of proposed changes to the Member Code of Conduct to be considered by the Constitutional Working Group and Governance Committee prior to final consideration as to adoption of any changes at Full Council in July 2021.</p>	<p>Some changes were made at Full Council in July 2021. The adoption of the Full LGA Model was identified for further consideration following the publication of the LGA guidance. This is scheduled for review during 22/23 and will be considered by the Constitutional Working Group and Governance Committee although should adoption be recommended this would need to be considered by Full Council. It is hoped that this will happen in July 2022 (see 3.10)</p>
GOV21_3	<p><b>Governance of Budgetary Control</b> - Develop plan to ensure delivery of 2021/22 budget savings and identify options to close the potential budget gap for 2022/23, taking account of consultation requirements and stakeholder engagement and ensuring Member involvement in developing proposals.</p>	<p>Savings for 2021/22 were monitored during the year and will be reported back to Management and Members. The July 2022 MTFS will be updated to reflect any lessons learned.</p>
GOV21_4	<p><b>Procurement and Social Value</b> - To embed, train and develop the Procurement and Social Value Policy during 2021/22</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>

### 3.10. Areas for improvement or monitoring during 2022/23:

Ref	Area	Action to be taken in 2022/23	Responsible Officer
GOV22_1	<b>Financial Rules</b>	Updated financial rules will be reviewed and approved by Council and associated operational Practice Notes updated and implemented accordingly.	Section 151 Officer
GOV22_2	<b>Cyber Security</b>	Continue to progress our cyber security recommendations that come from the vCISO service. Align to best practice and frameworks as relevant. Deliver updated Cyber Security strategy and review all policies. Procure a retainer for Cyber Security incident response team.	Digital Services Manager
GOV22_3	<b>Financial Management Code Action Plan</b>	A self-assessment against CIPFA's Financial Management Code will be completed and action plan produced to meet any shortfalls.	Section 151 Officer
GOV22_4	<b>Member Code of Conduct</b>	The Constitutional working group will be considering a report in relation to the potential adoption of the LGA model code in May 2022. This will be reported to the Governance Committee in June 2022. Should the committee wish to recommend the adoption of the model code the final decision will be made by Full Council in July 2022 which could mean the code being adopted shortly afterwards. Appropriate training will be provided and follow up actions considered in relation to parish tier authorities.	Monitoring Officer
GOV22_5	<b>Community Governance Review</b>	Following the Final Recommendations approved by members at Full Council in March 2022 arrangements are being made to make a reorganisation order, the creation of two new parish councils and various other actions to take effect by April 2023. Various administrative and other actions will arise because of the review and progress will be reported to the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group. The next update is due May 2022.	Monitoring Officer

#### 4. Certification

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements, as defined above, have been effectively operating during the year. We did not find any matters that needed addressing during our review other than those that were previously identified and have been progressed.

Signed.....

Leader of the Council

Signed.....

Chief Executive

Date: July 2022