

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to inform the Committee that the format and content of the Statement had been reviewed and updated to be easier to navigate, reduce duplication, reflect best practice and be more action orientated. The Committee noted that the Statement would be taking on greater importance in the way Local Authorities would be assessed in the future and were reminded that the Statement was a working document until the Statement of Accounts were signed, and the Annual Governance Statement endorsed, by the Audit Committee.

During the Committee's consideration of the Statement, concern was raised regarding the use of updates on local government performance from the Office for Local Government (Oflog). Whilst it was appreciated why Oflog was an area of focus, the value of Oflog's Data Explorer was questioned by a Committee Member who asserted that it did not always hold the most up-to-date data, did not provide wider contextual information alongside the league table, had a narrow remit, did not necessarily reflect the Council's priorities, and duplicated other platforms which were arguably more effective as a form of benchmarking performance. That Committee Member hoped that, going forward, the emphasis of Oflog's remit would be reassessed.

Following a query by a Committee Member, the Corporate Performance Manager confirmed the decision making process for the Statement. A Committee Member expressed the importance of a well-chaired meeting and efficient debate in ensuring good governance.

Following a comment by a Committee Member that the Statement currently cited the Constitution as being last been updated on 3 January 2024, when the latest edition had been published in July 2024, the Corporate Performance Manager agreed to amend that date to reflect the most recent update.

The Committee expressed its support for the Statement. The Committee was informed that the Statement of Accounts (and Annual Governance Statement) were unlikely to be considered by the November 2024 meeting of the Audit Committee. It was therefore moved, seconded, and subsequently agreed that the recommendation be slightly amended so it did not refer to a specific meeting of the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED

That the comments provided by the Committee be incorporated into the final version of the Annual Governance Statement which was to be endorsed by a future meeting of the Audit Committee.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Governance Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.17 pm.

T Lunnon (Chair)