

# Code of Corporate Governance

---



North  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## **FOREWORD**

### **From the Chairman of the Audit Committee**

I am pleased to endorse this Code of Corporate Governance, which sets out the commitment of the Council to continue to uphold the highest possible standards of good governance. I hope you will find that the document clearly demonstrates our drive to ensure this.

Good governance is key to achieving our vision.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Good governance**

Good governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner.

### **Our commitment**

North Northamptonshire Council is committed to upholding the highest possible standards of good corporate governance, believing that good governance leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources, increased public involvement and trust in the Council and ultimately good outcomes.

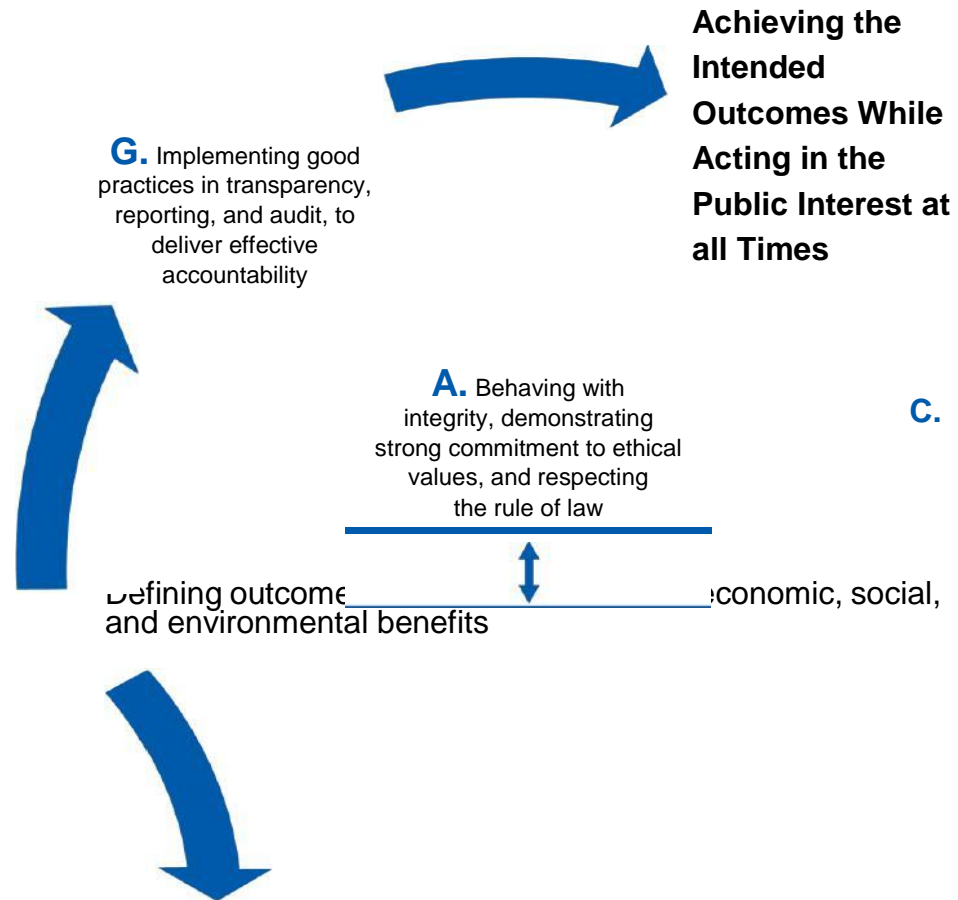
Good governance flows from shared values, culture, and behaviour and from systems and structures. This Code of Corporate Governance is a public statement that sets out the framework through which the Council meets its commitment to good corporate governance.

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community. It 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.

The corporate governance of the Council is based on the following principles recommended by CIPFA/SOLACE in a joint document entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' which builds on the seven Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life (Appendix A):

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

This document describes how the Council achieves the seven principles of good governance and describes how the Council's corporate governance arrangements will be monitored and reviewed.



**F.** Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

**B.** Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

**D.** Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes



**E.** Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it



**Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.**

Supporting Principles	To meet the requirements of this Principle:	This is evidenced by:
<b>Behaving with integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect through its Constitution, Corporate and Service Plans and other key policies.</li> <li>• The Council's Codes of Conduct for officers and members, and supporting guidance, communicate the expectation that members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated, thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation. The Council's Constitution (Part 5) sets out the underlying principles which underpin the Codes of Conduct, based on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).</li> <li>• The Council has in place a Performance Management Framework, which ensures that North Northamptonshires vision and values are communicated to and understood by colleagues.</li> <li>• The Council has in place arrangements to ensure that Councillor's and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and has in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice. This includes maintaining the statutory Register of Members Interests and requiring officers to make Declarations of Interests.</li> <li>• The Council has in place arrangements to ensure that core corporate policies and processes are designed in conformity with ethical standards and are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are operating effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Council Services Plans</li> <li>• The Council's Constitution</li> <li>• Members Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Officers Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Performance Management Framework</li> <li>• Register of Members' Interests</li> <li>• Declaration of Interest Guidance</li> <li>• Gifts and Hospitality Guidance</li> <li>• Members Induction/Training</li> <li>• Financial Regulations</li> <li>• Contract Procedure Rules</li> <li>• Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>• HR Policies and Procedures</li> <li>• Democracy and Standards Committee</li> </ul>

<b>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Constitution establishes a clear ethical framework for the Council's operation, and core corporate policies and procedures place emphasis on agreed ethical values.</li> <li>• The Codes of Conduct ensures that personal behaviour is underpinned with ethical values which permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation.</li> <li>• The Council maintains an effective Democracy and Standards Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Constitution</li> <li>• Democracy and Standards Committee Committee</li> <li>• Partnerships Policy</li> <li>• Members Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Officers Code of Conduct</li> </ul>
<b>Respecting the rule of law</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's policies and culture set the tone for members and staff to demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations, and ensure that statutory officers, other key post holders, and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.</li> <li>• The Council maintains and implements a Whistleblowing Policy to enable employees to raise any concerns of wrongdoing in confidence and without fear of reprisal.</li> <li>• External suppliers, members of the public and Councillors may raise any concerns about suspected illegal or illegitimate practices via the Council's formal Complaints Procedure.</li> <li>• The Council recognises the limits of lawful action and observes both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on it by public law. The Council observes all specific legislative requirements placed upon it, as well as the requirements of general law, and deals with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively. The Council strives to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Council ensures corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively through the Anti-Bribery Policy, The Counter Fraud Response Plan and the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy</li> <li>• Counter Fraud response plan</li> <li>• Anti-Bribery Policy</li> <li>• Anti-Money Laundering Policy</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>• Formal Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• Role of the Monitoring Officer as per the Constitution and</li> <li>• Complaints Procedures.</li> </ul>

**Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

Supporting Principles	To meet the requirements of this Principle:	This will be evidenced by:
<b>Openness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Constitution, Forward Plan and Executive system ensures that</li> <li>• decision-making is open and there is appropriate oversight and challenge, with an</li> <li>• organizational commitment to openness.</li> <li>• The Council makes decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. Committee meetings are held in public, and</li> <li>• minutes and papers are available to the public on the Council's website, including</li> <li>• regular financial and performance forecasts. If a decision needs to be kept</li> <li>• confidential, then the justification for this is provided.</li> <li>• The Council's Corporate Plan, Statements of Accounts, and key strategies are</li> <li>• available through the website.</li> <li>• An effective Internal Audit function is resourced and maintained, with regular</li> <li>• reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee.</li> <li>• The Council is committed to being transparent, accountable and to increasing the</li> <li>• amount of data it publishes for reuse by others. The Council maintains a Publication</li> <li>• Scheme listing the information available to the public as a matter of course, and</li> <li>• performance figures are published regarding responses to FOI requests.</li> <li>• The Council uses formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/courses of action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward Plan</li> <li>• The Council's Constitution</li> <li>• Committee System</li> <li>• Internal Audit</li> <li>• Audit Committee</li> <li>• Publication Scheme</li> <li>• Freedom of Information</li> <li>• guidance</li> <li>• Compliance Performance</li> <li>• reports for FOI's</li> <li>• Council Website</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Statement of Accounts</li> <li>• Committee agendas, reports</li> <li>• and minutes</li> <li>• Register of Members' Interests</li> </ul>



<b>Engaging with institutional stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council considers those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable, to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each sustainably.</li> <li>• The Council aims to develop formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant Partnership Register</li> <li>• The Council's Constitution</li> <li>• Information Governance Agreements for Data Sharing between partners</li> </ul>
<b>Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council makes decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. Committee meetings are available to the public, and minutes and papers are available to the public on the Council's website, including regular financial and performance forecasts. If a decision needs to be kept confidential, then the justification for this is provided.</li> <li>• The Council consults on its Corporate Plan proposals and other key aspects of its vision, strategic plans and priorities, with the local community and other key stakeholders. The Council takes account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users.</li> <li>• The Council encourages, collects and evaluates the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs. The Council maintains a customer feedback and complaints procedure to enable stakeholders to submit their views on Council performance and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plan Consultation Consultation Strategy Consultation page on Council website</li> <li>• Customer Contact Centre and Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• Comments, Compliments and complaints on website</li> </ul>

**Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.**

<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>To meet the requirements of this Principle:</b>	<b>This will be evidenced by:</b>
<b>Defining outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Corporate Plan forms its agreed statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes, which provides the basis for the authority's overall strategy, planning and other decisions. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's Vision and defines the key outcomes for North Northamptonshire. Specific Council strategies and policies link to the outcomes defined in the Corporate Plan.</li> <li>• The Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will deliver defined outcomes on a sustainable basis, within the resources that will be available. It also specifies the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users, for the next five years.</li> <li>• Service Plans set out Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be used to assess the achievement of the Council's outcomes. The Council's corporate KPIs are reported to Governance and Audit Committee and The Performance Improvement Board as part of the regular Finance and Performance reporting.</li> <li>• The Council operates a risk management system to identify and manage risks to the achievement of outcomes. The Corporate Risk Register is reported to and reviewed by the Council's Corporate Management Team, and the Governance and Audit Committee for Performance on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Corporate Delivery Plan</li> <li>• Team Plans</li> <li>• Corporate Management Team</li> <li>• Risk and Opportunity</li> <li>• Management Toolkit &amp; framework</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Statement of Accounts</li> <li>• Capital Strategy (in MTFP)</li> </ul>

<b>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council considers and balances the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision. The Council seeks to take a longer-term view with regard to decision-making, which takes account of risks.</li> <li>• Consultation is undertaken for the key proposals included in the Council's Corporate Plan, which identify the impact of decisions on different groups within the communities affected by the proposals.</li> <li>• The Council seeks to determine the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs.</li> <li>• The Council identifies and monitors corporate performance indicators, which demonstrate performance against the Council's planned outcomes and how benefits are being delivered.</li> <li>• The Council maintains a prudential financial framework, balancing commitments with available resources and monitoring income and expenditure levels to ensure a sustainable balance is achieved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Business Plan Consultation Annual Statement of Accounts</li> <li>• External Auditors reports</li> <li>• Residents Survey 2017</li> <li>• Consultation Strategy</li> </ul>
--	---	--

**Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.**

Supporting Principles	To meet the requirements of this Principle:	This will be evidenced by:
<b>Determining interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Corporate Project Management process incorporates Business Cases for proposed projects and savings, ensuring decision makers receive objective and</li> <li>• rigorous analysis of a variety of options for achieving outcomes, indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. This ensures best value</li> <li>• is achieved, however services are provided. In addition the Project Management</li> <li>• Guide requires that all major projects establish a Project Board which includes the relevant portfolio holder which ensures that there is appropriate political input into the project. Gateway Reviews are carried out during the lifetime of the project by an officer not on the Project Board and the shadow portfolio, which ensures that the project is monitored throughout its lifecycle.</li> <li>• The Council's Consultation approach ensures that decision-makers consider feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required. The aim is to support the prioritization of competing demands with limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts. A consultation team work with service area using systematized processes and methods, including a dedicated consultation portal. Committee reports include a title specifically around consultation to ensure that it is routinely considered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Guide &amp;</li> <li>• Toolkit</li> <li>• Business Cases</li> <li>• Committee reports</li> </ul> <p>Consultation website: <a href="#">North Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space</a></p>
<b>Planning Interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has an established annual Business Planning process which sets a strategic plan for the Council that informs the development of strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets. The Corporate Plan is reviewed annually meaning that mechanisms for delivering outcomes are regularly reviewed and can be adapted to changing circumstances.</li> <li>• The Corporate Plan incorporates medium term resource planning, including changes to revenue and capital expenditure. Budgets are prepared in accordance with the Council's objectives, strategies and the Corporate Plan. The Service Area Team Plans establish appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured. The Council ensures that capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Planning process</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Service Plans</li> <li>• Business Plan Consultation</li> <li>• Consultation Strategy</li> </ul>

<b>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council ensures the Corporate Plan integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.</li> <li>• The Council's Corporate Plan sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period, in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.</li> <li>• Achievement of Corporate Plan outcomes is monitored and reported to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team through Finance and Performance Reports and other reporting.</li> <li>• The Council maintains a robust system of risk management which identifies risks to the achievement of the Council's intended outcomes and puts in place mitigating actions to support achievement.</li> <li>• The Council maintains systems of business continuity and emergency planning to deal with failures in service delivery or emergencies which may threaten achievement of the Council's intended outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Risk Framework</li> <li>• Directorate Risk Registers</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Corporate Leadership Team</li> <li>• Business Continuity Plans</li> <li>• Emergency Planning</li> </ul>
--	---	---

<b>Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b>		
<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>To meet the requirements of this Principle:</b>	<b>This will be evidenced by:</b>
<b>Developing the entity's capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council recognises the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.</li> <li>• The Council maintains robust recruitment and selection processes to ensure that the Council is able to attract suitable candidates, ensuring a diverse workforce that will add value to the organisation.</li> <li>• The Council reviews its operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness, and seeks to improve resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options, in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant Partnership Register</li> <li>• Recruitment and Selection Policies</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• Capital Programme</li> </ul>
<b>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council's Executive, the Council, its committees and officers. The Scheme of Delegation clarifies the type of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for collective decision making of the governing body. Committee Terms of References set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council's Committees. This ensures that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained</li> <li>• The Council maintains protocols to ensure effective communication between Council Members and officers in their respective roles.</li> <li>• The Chief Finance Officer is a member of the Corporate Leadership Team and thus has direct access to the Leadership Team.</li> <li>• The Monitoring Officer is a member of the Corporate Leadership Team and thus has direct access to the Leadership Team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Constitution</li> <li>• Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>• Committee Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Members Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Officers Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Protocol on Members/Officer Relations</li> <li>• Induction Policy</li> <li>• Corporate Induction</li> <li>• Members Induction Programme</li> <li>• Ongoing Member Training</li> <li>• Performance Appraisal/PADP Scheme</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council develops the capabilities of members, senior management, and officers to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensuring Members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role, and that ongoing training is available and encouraged;</li> <li>➤ Ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis;</li> <li>➤ Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs;</li> <li>➤ Ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external;</li> <li>➤ Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce, and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and Development policy</li> <li>• Role of Internal Audit</li> <li>• CF/MO member of CLT</li> <li>• Intranet updates for health and wellbeing activities taking place</li> <li>• Health &amp; Wellbeing updates through communications</li> <li>• Employee Assistance Programme</li> <li>• Personal Safety Advice for Members</li> </ul>
--	--	---

<b>Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b>		
Supporting Principles	To meet the requirements of this Principle;	This will be evidenced by:
<b>Managing risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council recognises that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making. Robust and integrated risk management arrangements are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure that they are working effectively. Risk management is embedded into the culture of the Council.</li> <li>• The Council ensures that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated, and the Corporate Risk register is reported to and reviewed by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and the Audit and Governance Committee for performance on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk and opportunities Management toolkit and framework</li> <li>• Directorate Risk Registers</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Scrutiny panel for performance</li> <li>• Risk Reports to Committees</li> <li>• Project Management toolkit</li> </ul>
<b>Managing performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members and senior management are provided with regular reports on performance and progress towards outcome achievement.</li> <li>• The Council makes decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook</li> <li>• The Council encourages effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives, to support balanced and effective decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee agendas, reports, and minutes</li> <li>• Customer Feedback</li> <li>• Internal Audit Reports</li> </ul>



<b>Robust internal control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council ensures effective counter fraud, anti-corruption and anti-money laundering arrangements are in place.</li> <li>• Additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by Internal Audit. The Audit and Governance Committee is independent of the Executive and accountable to the Council, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment;</li> <li>➤ ensures that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counter-Fraud and Corruption Policy</li> <li>• Counter Fraud Response Plan</li> <li>• Anti-Money Laundering Policy</li> <li>• Internal Audit</li> <li>• Internal Audit Annual Report</li> <li>• Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>• Risk and Opportunities</li> <li>• Management toolkit and framework</li> <li>• Business and operational risk registers (from Tens System)</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Audit and Governance Committee</li> <li>• Democracy and Standards Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Managing data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's information governance policies and procedures ensure that effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data.</li> <li>• The Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) has lead responsibility to ensure that organizational information risks are properly identified and managed.</li> <li>• The Council ensures effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Information Governance Policy</li> <li>• Information requests Procedure (FOI/EIR)</li> <li>• ICT Security Policy</li> <li>• Data loss Procedure and Data Protection Guidelines</li> <li>• Data Protection and confidentiality in the workplace guidance</li> <li>• Document Retention Policy</li> <li>• Information Sharing Protocol</li> <li>• Senior Information Risk Owner</li> <li>• Significant Partnerships Policy</li> </ul>

<b>Strong public financial management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council ensures that its financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.</li> <li>• Ensures well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.</li> <li>• The Council ensures that officers with a role in financial management are provided with documentation to ensure support for robust public financial management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Regulations</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Business Planning Process</li> <li>• Budget Guidelines Document</li> </ul>
---	--	--

**Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability**

<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>To meet the requirements of this Principle;</b>	<b>This will be evidenced by:</b>
<b>Implementing good practice in transparency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council seeks to write and communicate reports and other information for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.</li> <li>• The Council complies with the Local Government Transparency Code and publishes information required in a timely manner.</li> <li>• The Council provides appropriate information to the public to ensure transparency, striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny, while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee agendas, papers, and minutes</li> <li>• District Council website</li> <li>• Publication Scheme</li> <li>• Forward Plan (what will be on agenda for each meeting)</li> </ul>
<b>Implementing good practice in reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Annual Governance Statement ensures robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied, and the results of this assessment are published.</li> <li>• The Council ensures that the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations.</li> <li>• The Council maintains open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement of Accounts</li> <li>• Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>• Annual External Audit Report and Letter</li> <li>• Internal Audit Reports</li> <li>• Committee agendas, reports, and minutes</li> </ul>

<b>Assurance and effective accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council maintains an effective Audit and Governance Committee and ensures that an effective internal audit function, with direct access to Members, is resourced and maintained. The Internal Audit service provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and verifies that recommendations are acted upon.</li> <li>• The Council ensures that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.</li> <li>• The Council welcomes peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies, as a result of which action plans are identified to implement recommendations.</li> <li>• When working in partnership, the Council ensures that arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit and Governance Committee</li> <li>• Role of Internal Audit</li> <li>• Results of External Inspections (ICO etc.)</li> <li>• Significant Partnerships Policy</li> <li>• Risk Framework</li> <li>• Council Meetings</li> </ul>
---	--	---

## **MONITORING AND REPORTING**

The Council will undertake an annual review of its governance arrangements to ensure continuing compliance with best practice to provide assurance that corporate governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively in practice. Where reviews of the corporate governance arrangements have revealed gaps, actions will be planned to enhance the governance arrangements accordingly.

The Council will prepare an Annual Governance Statement which will be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee for consideration and will form part of the Council's annual Financial Statement.

The Governance Statement will include:

- an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance (incorporating the system of internal control) and reference to the authority's code of governance;
- a reference to and assessment of the effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework and the role of those responsible for the development and maintenance of the governance environment;
- an opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework;
- a reference to how issues raised in the previous year's annual governance statement have been resolved; and
- a conclusion including a commitment to monitoring implementation as part of the next annual review.

The Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.

In reviewing and approving the Annual Governance Statement, members will be provided with detailed information regarding the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and system of internal control and how these address the key risks faced by the Council. Those Assurances will be available from a wide range of sources, including internal and external audit, a range of external inspectorates and managers from across the Council.

The Council will continually strive to operate an assurance framework, embedded into its business processes, that maps corporate objectives to risks, controls and assurances. This framework and regular reports on its application and effectiveness will provide members with assurances to support the Annual Governance Statement and will help members to identify whether corporate objectives and significant business risks are being properly managed.

## APPENDIX A

### **Seven principles for the conduct of individuals in public life**

The governance framework is supported by the seven **Principles of Public Life**, which set the standards of conduct and behaviour to which Councillors and employees should aspire in their day-to-day dealings (annexed to the **Members' Code of Conduct**).

#### **1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

#### **2. Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **3. Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office

#### **5. Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **6. Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.