

Flintshire County Council's

DRAFT Code of Corporate Governance

2021-2022



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Whilst the Council is the Administering Authority for the Clwyd Pension Fund (the Pension Fund), the Clwyd Pension Fund produce their own Annual Governance Statement.

1. Introduction and Purpose

In accordance with the *Delivering Good Governance Framework* there is an expectation that there is a formally set local structure of governance, often referred to as the Local Code, within each local authority although in practice it may consist of a number of documents. Each authority should be able to demonstrate that the governance structure in place complies with the principles and sub principles contained within the *Delivering Good Governance Framework*.

"Governance is at the heart of public services. It underpins how resources are managed, how decisions are made, how services are delivered and the impact they have, now and in the future. It also infuses how organisations are led and how they interact with the public. Governance needs to be robust but it must also be proportionate. Well-governed organisations are dynamic and take well-managed risks; they are not stagnant and bureaucratic."¹

Flintshire County Council acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance. The Council has developed a Local Code (structure) of Corporate Governance that defines the principles that underpin the governance of the organisation. The Local Code forms part of the Council Constitution and can be accessed on the Council's website. A summary of the principles upon which it is based can be found in section 3 of this document.

The governance framework comprises the culture, values, systems and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled. The framework brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, good practice principles and management processes. At the heart of our effective corporate governance is our adherence to the seven Nolan principles derived from *Striking the Balance - Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life in Regulation* as listed within the table across and the five ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The diagram below is based on the International Framework: *Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) (the 'International Framework')*,

Seven Principles of Public Life	
Selflessness	Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
Integrity	Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
Objectivity	Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
Accountability	Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
Openness	Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
Honesty	Holders of public office should be truthful.
Leadership	Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour.

¹ Wales Audit Office: "Discussion Paper: The governance challenges posed by indirectly provided, publicly funded services in Wales" 2017

and illustrates the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other.

Principles A and B permeate implementation of principles C to G. The diagram also illustrates that good governance is dynamic, and that an entity as a whole should be committed to improving governance on a continuing basis through a process of evaluation and review.

The update to our Code of Corporate Governance reflects the changes made since due to the ongoing global pandemic.

Seven Principles of Good Governance



2. The Council's Governance Arrangements during the ongoing Pandemic:

As the Council started the financial period 2021/22, the Council continues to respond to the global Pandemic. Whilst all internal controls arrangements continue to remain in place below details the additional measures need in order to function during the pandemic. These arrangements are:

- Internal Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) led by Chief Executive continue to be held where necessary.
- Business Continuity Plans remain in place for all corporate services and service portfolios
- HR Business Continuity Plan continues to be invoked
- Where applicable service closure or restricted access decisions were made based on Government guidelines, national trends and public behaviour
- Critical services were maintained - classed as those which protect life, protect the vulnerable, ensure public safety, and/or keep the transport infrastructure open and help workers to do their job
- Key workers were supported to provide these services
- Remote and home working continues to be maximised
- Secure and compliant regional and national data sharing remains in place to support customer engagement e.g. Test Trace and Protect

Command Structure - Hierarchy

Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) – Gold (as and when required to respond to the pandemic)

- Directing strategy and making principal decisions
- Where applicable co-ordination of tactical groups and any inter-dependent activities
- Risk evaluation and management
- Escalation to regional and national decision-makers as required

Tactical Groups and Leads - Silver

- Direct strategy and decision-making in areas of specialism/delegation continued for workforce
- Risk evaluation and management
- Escalation of decisions/risks to EMRT as required

Decision-Making and Risk Management

- Full democratic governance has been restored and meetings are currently held remotely
- Recovery business plans and risk registers were produced for the corporate organisation and all five service portfolios
- Flintshire continues to be the regional lead employer for the Test Trace Protect service which is supported by an Inter Authority Agreement

Financial Risk Management

- Claims for additional costs and lost income continued to be made to the Welsh Government Hardship Fund.
- Cash Flow forecasting to ensure that the Council is in good liquidity continues to be undertaken on a regular basis
- All financial decisions are managed in line with normal Finance Procedure Rules
- Financial risks continued to be mitigated through (1) controls of non-essential expenditure and (2) access to special national funds and grants
- Emergency support has been given to some Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) / Community Asset Transfers (CATs)
- The emergency reserve (£3.0m) continued to be utilised for ineligible additional costs
- We have continued to work closely with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Welsh Governance (WG) on financial risk profiling, and in lobbying for and accessing national emergency financial support
- Monthly budget monitoring reports to Cabinet and CROSC provide updates on the WG Hardship Fund and the Income Loss position
- Finance risks and mitigations are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis and reported to the new Recovery Committee

Recovery Planning

- A cross-party Member Recovery Board continues to operate
- The recovery business plans, risk registers and mitigation action plans, and financial tracker documents were reported to the Board. These are reviewed and updated at either weekly or two-weekly intervals
- Arrangements were delivered through remote attendance meetings, via Webex video and subsequently Zoom software, with the first in person Council meeting held in October 2021.

3. How the Council Achieves Good Governance overall:

With this section we demonstrate how good governance is achieved and maintained against the Core Principles and Sub Principles of the Delivering Good Governance Framework.

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

Behaving with integrity	How the Council achieves this
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring Members and employees 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. 2. Ensuring Members take the lead in establishing specific values for the organisation and its employees and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles). 3. Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions. 4. Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies/processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Constitution has the Codes of Conduct and Protocols which Members and Officers (employees) have agreed to comply with. • The Council requires our Members, whether they are elected or co-opted, to sign and to be bound by our Code. • Code of Conduct for Members (1,2,3,& 4) • The Flintshire Standard which contains a Local Resolution Procedure for complaints about Member behaviour (1,2,3 & 4) • Protocol for Members in their dealings with contractors, developers and other third parties. (1,3 & 4) • Protocol on Member/ Officer relations (1,2,3 & 4) • Officers' Code of Conduct (1,3 & 4) • We operate an effective elections protocol, ensuring high standards are upheld during election periods. (1) • Our list of 'politically restricted posts is reviewed regularly and post holders reminded of statutory restrictions on their political activities.(1,2,3,& 4) • We have Diversity and Equality ; Dignity at Work, and Whistleblowing policies; an Anti-fraud and Corruption Strategy and a Fraud Response Plan (1,2,3 & 4) • Guidance has been provided to members on conduct of Remote Attendance Meetings

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	How the Council achieves this:
<p>5. Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance.</p> <p>6. Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's operation.</p> <p>7. Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.</p> <p>8. Ensuring the external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's commitment to the Nolan principles is shown in the codes and policies below which are found in the Constitution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Code of Conduct for Members</i> (5,6) – <i>The Flintshire Standard</i> which contains a <i>Local Resolution Procedure for complaints about Member behaviour</i> (5,6) – <i>Protocol for Members in their dealings with contractors, developers and other third parties.</i> (5,6) – <i>Protocol on Member/ Officer relations</i> (5,6) – <i>Officers' Code of Conduct</i> (5,6) • Contract Procedure Rules (7) • Financial Procedure Rules (7) • Procurement Strategy (7) • Whistle blowing policy (7) • Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (8)
Respecting the rule of law	How the Council achieves this:
<p>9. Ensuring Members and employees demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as adhering to the relevant laws and regulations.</p> <p>10. Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and Members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>11. Striving to optimise the use of the Council's full powers available for the benefit of its citizens, its communities and other stakeholders.</p> <p>12. Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Chief Officer (Governance) is the Monitoring Officer and Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) (9,10,11,12,13) • The Internal Audit function within the Governance Portfolio reports regularly to the Governance and Audit Committee which includes two independent lay Members. (9,11,12,13) • We have a Standards committee which promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members. It comprises five independent, lay Members, three county councillors and one representative of community and town councils. (9,10,11) • Our relationship with the Wales Audit office and other regulatory bodies (Information Commissioner's Office and the Equality and Human Rights Commission, plus the four Welsh Commissioners for

<p>13. Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.</p>	<p>Welsh Language, Future Generations, Children and Older People) is strong. (9, 11,12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have a robust Overview & Scrutiny function of five committees which together cover all of the Council's functions and our external partnerships. (9,10,11)• The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Governance and Audit Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny Committees now meet on a quarterly basis as a Liaison Group to ensure that there is co-ordination and to avoid duplication of activity between the functions. (10)• Unresolved or unsatisfied customer complaints can be considered by Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, whose contact details are published on our website. (9,10,12,13)
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Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Openness	How the Council achieves this
<p>14. Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness.</p> <p>15. Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping decisions confidential should be provided.</p> <p>16. Provide clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.</p> <p>17. Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to inform the most appropriate and effective interventions / courses of action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's website, intranet and partners networks to continually demonstrate our commitment to openness (14,15) • Most committee reports are considered in public unless there is demonstrable legal basis for confidentiality (15) • Annual Reports for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Governance and Audit Committee (14,15) • County Council and Planning Committee meetings are streamed via live webcast. During the pandemic all Remote attendance meetings are recorded and subsequently available on our website (15) • Committee Papers published on the Council's website (16) • County Forum (17) • Concerns and Complaints Policy (17) • Surveys (17) • Consultation events (17) • Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards (17) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from a variety of sources: Website - Social Media - Publications and leaflets - Established links and regular meetings with local interest groups/forums - Invitations to Members of the public to submit issues they consider should be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees - Consultation on the budget process with local stakeholders (residents and businesses) to help shape its budget proposals and encourage community involvement. (17)

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	How the Council achieves this:
<p>18. Effectively engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objective and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.</p> <p>19. Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more effectively and outcomes achieved more effectively.</p> <p>20. Ensuring that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change, a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners; and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnerships (18,19) • Flintshire Public Services Board (Well-being Plan) (19) • Partnerships with NEWydd and Aura Leisure and Libraries (19) • Agreed governance of Partnerships (20)
Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users	How the Council achieves this:
<p>21. Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.</p> <p>22. Ensuring communication methods are effective and that Members and employees are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.</p> <p>23. Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.</p> <p>24. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and Engagement Policy (21, 22, 23,24) • Social Media Policy (21, 24) • Surveys, Impact and Evidence gathering (22) • Effective methods of Communication (22) • Integrated Impact Assessments (25) • Strategic Reports (26) • Medium Term Financial Strategy (26) • Wellbeing of Future Generations Policy (26) • Annual Performance Report (26) • Armed Forces Covenant/Armed Forces Forum (23,25)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">25. Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.26. Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and services users. | |
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Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Defining outcomes	How the Council achieves this:
<p>27. Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.</p> <p>28. Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including individual citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer.</p> <p>29. Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.</p> <p>30. Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes.</p> <p>31. Managing expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan 2021-22 (27,28) • Business Recovery Plans (29, 31) • Medium Term Financial Strategy (29,31) • Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan (29,31) • Resilience Statements (29,31) • Risk Management Framework and User Guide (30) • Digital Strategy (31) • Concerns and Complaints Policy (31) • Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards (31) • People Strategy (31) • HR Business Continuity Plan (31)
Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	How the Council achieves this:
<p>32. Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision.</p> <p>33. Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the Council's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Reports (32,33,34) • Budget Setting Policy (32,33) • Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan (32,33) • Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments which also integrates with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WBFG) (34,35) • Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan (34) • Armed Forces Covenant (35)

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| <p>34. Determining 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 optimal solutions for stakeholders.</p> <p>35. Ensuring fair access to services.</p> | |
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Principle D: Determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievements of the intended outcomes

Determining interventions	How the Council achieves this:
<p>36. Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided.</p> <p>37. Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee System (36) • Committee Meetings, workshops & briefings (36) • Committee Minutes (36) • Committee Reports (37) • Updated Guidance Notes for the completion of Committee Reports (37)
Planning interventions	How the Council achieves this:
<p>38. Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets.</p> <p>39. Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other interventions can best be delivered.</p> <p>40. Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks.</p> <p>41. Ensuring arrangements are flexible/agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances.</p> <p>42. Establishing appropriate local performance indicators (as well as statutory or other national performance indicators) as part of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Schedule of Meetings approved by the annual meeting of Council (38,39) • Cabinet receives the combined forward work programme on a monthly basis (38,39) • Each of the five Overview & Scrutiny Committees reviews its own Forward work programme at each meeting (38,39) • Council Plan 2021/22 Performance Monitoring (38,42) • Consultation and Engagement Policy (39) • Business Recovery Plans (40) • Business Recovery Plan and Efficiency Plan Monitoring Reviews (41,43)

<p>the planning process in order to assess how the performance of services is to be measured.</p> <p>43. Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.</p> <p>44. Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>45. Informing medium and long term resources planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Financial Term Strategy (44,45)
<p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<p>How the Council achieves this:</p>
<p>46. Ensuring the Medium Term Financial Strategy integrates and balances off service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.</p> <p>47. Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.</p> <p>48. Ensuring the Medium Term Financial Strategy 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.</p> <p>49. Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' or 'community benefits' through service planning and commissioning. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 states that this is "the additional benefit to the community over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy (46,47) • Annual Budget Setting process (46,47) • Procurement Strategy (49) • Contract Procedure Rules (49) • Social Value Strategy (49) • Social Value Procurement Policy (49)

Principle E: Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaderships and the individuals within it

Developing the entity's capacity	How the Council achieves this:
<p>50. Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.</p> <p>51. Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the Council's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>52. Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.</p> <p>53. Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance strategic allocation of resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Performance Report (50,51) • Council Plan Performance Monitoring (50,51) • Agreed Council's Capital Strategy & Asset Management Plan (50,51) • Review of the Council's People, Digital and Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards (50) • Audit Wales Audit Summary (51,52) • Sustainability of services through collaborative working with partners (52) • Strategic and/or regional partnerships/forums – for example, NWRIP, PSB Support Networks (52) • Endorsed and approved People Strategy and associated action plan (53) • Transition plan management, workforce succession plans and service resilience and efficiency statements (53)
Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	How the Council achieves this:
<p>54. Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Constitution and Scheme of Delegation are under regular review and set out the arrangements for our governance (54, 55, 56 and 57) • Ability to respond to change demands through flexibilities within the Senior Management structure (57)

<p>55. Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions delegated to the Cabinet and those reserved for the collective decision making of the Council.</p> <p>56. Ensuring the Leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Chief Executive leads the Council in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by Members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority.</p> <p>57. Developing the capabilities of Members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the Council to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks.</p> <p>58. Ensuring employees have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role with ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged.</p> <p>59. Ensuring Members and employees have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to continuously update their knowledge.</p> <p>60. Ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from both internal and external governance weaknesses.</p> <p>61. Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.</p> <p>62. Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.</p> <p>63. Holding employees to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training and development needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual corporate and services specific induction and support for all employees in new jobs. Bespoke induction and support for elected Members (58) • After whole council elections, there is a comprehensive induction programme for new and returning Members (57) • Performance appraisals, are one of a number of performance management tools used, including 1-2-1 meetings, day to day supervision and team meetings, that aim to ensure employees' performance contributes to business objectives, and is used as part of a holistic approach to managing performance (58,63) • Knowledge and skills and built and maintained through regular briefings and workshops (59 and 60) • Action plans following external regulator inspection (60) • A range of public consultation methods, a concerns and complaints policy and statutory protocols for public engagement in Overview and Scrutiny (61) • Consultation and engagement policy (61) • Welcome peer reviews of both governance arrangements and service delivery to improve the effectiveness of leadership (62) • Career structures are in place for all employees and encourage participation in development and training (62,63) • Wellbeing appraisal introduced during 2020 which focuses on health and well-being of employees and immediate priorities as we continue to respond to challenges as a result of the COVID pandemic (63) • Provision of learning and development opportunities for all employees, details of available courses accessible on the Infonet and bookable via iTrent (63) • An increase in the use of e-learning to support employees working remotely (63) • A range of HR policies and procedures including, Health and Wellbeing, Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Workplace Policies are available on the Infonet (64)
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<p>64. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of and promotion of our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides emotional and practical support for issues at home or in work and supplements the support available from Occupational Health (64)• Dedicated Health and Wellbeing section on the Infonet which provides access to support on an individual, management and team level, including the useful numbers and links to external support networks e.g. MIND, Samaritans (64)
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Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management

Managing risk	How the Council achieves this:
<p>65. Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making.</p> <p>66. Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.</p> <p>67. Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Framework and User Guide (65) • Corporate and Portfolio Risk Registers. (65,66,67) • Business Recovery Plans (65) • Service Plans (65) • Reporting of Corporate Recovery Risks to Recovery Committee (66,67)
Managing Performance	How the Council achieves this:
<p>68. Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.</p> <p>69. Making 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.</p> <p>70. Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the Council's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.</p> <p>71. Providing Members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring. (68) • Post Implementation Reviews. (68) • Integrated Impact Assessments. (69) • Financial Procedural Rules. (69) • Contract Procedural Rules. (69) • Five Overview and Scrutiny Committees. (70) • Chair & Vice Chairs Liaison Group. (70) • Calling in Process. (70) • Cabinet. (70,71) • Council's Constitution. (70) • Council Policies. (70) • Council Plan 2021/22 Performance Monitoring (71) • Annual Improvement Review. (71) • Publicly published Agenda and minutes. (71) • Publicly reported Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report. (71)

72. Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly Report Internal Audit Annual Report. (71) Budget Monitoring Process. (72) Budget Monitoring Reports. (72) Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny. (72)
Robust internal control	How the Council achieves this:
<p>73. Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the Council's objectives.</p> <p>74. Evaluating and monitoring the Council's risk management and internal control on a regular basis.</p> <p>75. Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place.</p> <p>76. Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.</p> <p>77. Ensuring an Governance and Audit Committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the Cabinet provides a further source of effective assurance arrangements for managing risk and maintain an effective control environment and that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Management Framework and User Guide. (73,74) Business Recovery Plans. (73) Service Plans. (73) Governance and Audit Committees endorsement of strategy and biannual performance reports. (74,76) Corporate Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy. (75) Fraud Response Plan. (75) Whistleblowing Policy. (75) Fraud Risk Assessment of the Council (75) Internal Audit and Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standard (PSIAS). (76) Independence of the Internal Audit Service within the Council. (76) Delivery of the Annual Internal Audit Risk Based Plan. (74,76) Governance and Audit Committee comprising of seven Members and two lay Members. (77) Governance and Audit Committee Charter and Terms of Reference. (77) Governance and Audit Committee's Annual Report. (77)
Managing Data	How the Council achieves this:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Security Management System. (78,79) Data Protection Policies, Guidance and Training. (78,79)

<p>78. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to ensure the security of personal data used.</p> <p>79. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.</p> <p>80. Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Security Training. (78) • Public Sector Network Accreditation. (78) • Wales Accord for Sharing Personal Information (WASPI). (79) • GDPR Phase 2 Action Plan. (78,79,80) • Corporate Information Asset Register. (78,80) • Cyber Essentials Accreditation. (78) • Data Processing Agreements. (78) • Corporate reporting and monitoring of security breaches. (78,80) • Data Protection Audit. (80) • IT Technical Specification. (78, 79, 80) • Central recording of corporate performance data (InPhase) (80) • External data quality audits. (80)
<p>Strong public financial management</p>	<p>How the Council achieves this:</p>
<p>81. Ensuring the Council's financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.</p> <p>82. Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all organisational levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS.) (81) • Business Efficiency Plans. (82) • Part 4 of the Constitution – Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules. (82) • Monthly revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (82) • Quarterly capital monitoring reports to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (82) • Treasury Management and Policy Statement. (82) • Scheme of Delegation. (82) • Financial Procedural Rules. (82) • Council's Constitution. (82) • Internal Performance Indicators for the MTFS, monitored with the Council Plan. (82)

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

Implementing good practice in transparency	How the Council achieves this:
<p>83. Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.</p> <p>84. Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny whilst not being too onerous for the Council to provide and for users to understand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Website (83,84) • Council's publication scheme (83,84) • Annual Performance Report (83,84) • Updated Report Format and Writing Guidance (83,84) • Easy read and use of infographics of strategies and public documents (83,84)
Implementing good practices in reporting	How the Council achieves this:
<p>85. Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources.</p> <p>86. Ensuring Members and senior management own the results.</p> <p>87. Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (Annual Governance Statement).</p> <p>88. Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.</p> <p>89. Ensuring 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Performance Report (85) • Council Plan 2021/22 Performance Monitoring (85) • Audited and Signed Statement of Accounts (85,86,89) • Monitoring and reporting of Council improvement (87) • Corporate Self-Assessment (86,87) • Code of Corporate Governance (87,88) • Annual Governance Statement (87,88)

Assurance and effective accountability	How is the Council achieves this:
<p>90. Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.</p> <p>91. Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to Members is in place which provides assurance with regard to the Council's governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon.</p> <p>92. Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.</p> <p>93. Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement</p> <p>94. Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Papers (90) • External Regulation Reporting and Monitoring Protocol (90) • Independent position of Internal Audit within the Council with direct access to Senior Officers and Members (91) • Quarterly meetings with the Leader of the Council (91) • Annual Self-Assessment and external assessment for compliance with the Internal Audit Public Sector Standards (PSIAS) (91) • Regular Self-Assessment of Services (92) • External validation via benchmarking and commissioned assessments (92) • External Regulatory Reports (Committee Minutes) (92) • Annual Summary of External Regulatory reports to Governance and Audit Committee (92) • Peer Reviews (92) • Risk Assessment and Governance Arrangements for Partnerships (alternative delivery models) (93) • Partnership Board Minutes (94)

4. Monitoring and Review

The Code of Corporate Governance forms part of the Constitution. It is reviewed and updated annually by the Corporate Governance Group to ensure it is up to date and complies with all relevant legislation and other requirements. The Code of Corporate Governance is used to update the Annual Governance Statement.

The membership of the Corporate Governance Group is:

Lisa Brownbill (Chair)	Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager
Jay Davies	Strategic Performance Advisor
Andrew Elford	Principal Accountant
Mandy Humphries	ICT Services Business Manager
Sharon Carney	Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development
Margaret Parry-Jones	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Rebecca Jones	Customer Contact Service Manager
Kelly Oldham-Jones	Strategic Executive Officer

5 Assurance Statements

I am satisfied that there are effective governance arrangements in place, including a sound system of internal control, throughout the year ended 31st March and that this is ongoing.

Signed	Position	Date
	Chief Executive	
	Section 151 Officer	
	Chief Officer - Governance	