

Local Code of Corporate Governance

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.

A Council's Code of Corporate Governance is:

"The system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities"

Our commitment

South Cambridgeshire District 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.

This local code of governance has been developed in accordance with and is consistent with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government framework, which builds on the seven Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life.

Core principles of good governance

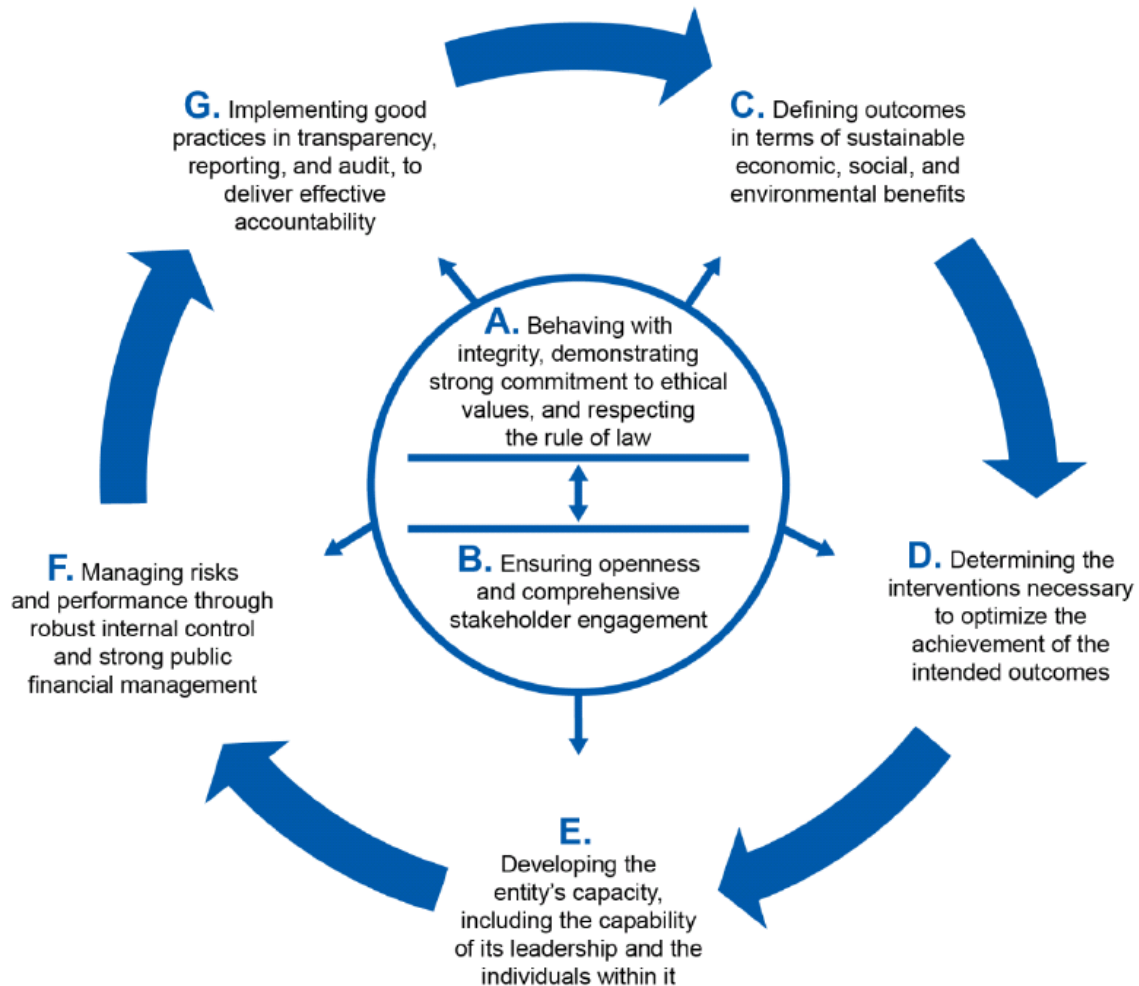
The core governance principles of the council are:-

- 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.

Applying the core principles of good governance

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.

Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



This Code takes each of the principles of good governance in turn and sets out the systems, processes and principles the Council has put in place to ensure good corporate governance.

The Code will be reviewed annually through the Annual Governance Statement process, which will identify the actions to be taken to enhance the code or address any limitations within it.

Principle A – Behaving with Integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaving with integrity Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values Respecting the rule of law 	<p>The Council expects the authority's leadership – both Members and Officers - to create a climate of openness, support and respect and to uphold the Council's values.</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>Register of Interests</p>
	<p>Standards of conduct and personal behaviour are set out in the Employee Code of Conduct, the Member Code of Conduct and in the Member/ Officer protocol. An up-to-date register of Member and Officer Senior Officer Interests is maintained. The underlying principles which underpin the Codes of Conduct build upon the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).</p>	<p>Employee Code of Conduct</p> <p>Member Code of Conduct</p> <p>Member/Officer Protocol</p>
	<p>The Council has put in place procedures for considering complaints so that members of the public can express dissatisfaction with Council services and their concerns can be monitored and addressed. The Council has appointed two "independent persons" to support this, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act, 2011. It has a key performance measure for the timeliness of complaint responses.</p>	<p>Complaints Procedure</p> <p>Quarterly performance reports</p>
	<p>The Council's Civic Affairs Committee is responsible for constitutional issues and ensures that the constitution is monitored and updated when required. The terms of reference of the Civic Affairs committee include responsibility for advising on the Council's ethical framework and the promotion of openness, accountability and probity to ensure the highest standards of conduct.</p>	<p>Terms of Reference for Civic Affairs Committee</p> <p>Constitution</p>
	<p>The Council maintains a Whistleblowing policy to enable confidential reporting of suspected breaches of the Employee Code of Conduct or unethical behaviour. It also maintains an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy. Both policies are reviewed periodically by the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p>	<p>Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</p>
	<p>The Council's standing orders and financial regulations put in place processes designed to ensure that Members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.</p>	<p>Financial Regulations</p>
	<p>The Council operates within the legal framework for local councils complying with its statutory duties and making the most of its powers to meet the needs of the District and its residents.</p>	<p>Constitution</p>
	<p>The Head of Legal Practice is the Council's Monitoring Officer, responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer Role Description and Article 12 of Constitution</p>

	<p>The Council ensures that Statutory Officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.</p> <p>The Council maintains Human Resources Behavioural Policies which are periodically reviewed e.g. adoption of revised Dignity at Work Policy 2017-18</p> <p>The Council has a clear Procurement Strategy designed to meet the Council's wider objectives and Contract Procedures Rules designed to deliver robust and fair procurement processes.</p>	<p>Recruitment, selection and training policies</p> <p>Council Intranet (In-site) HR Policy pages</p> <p>Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>Contract Procedure Rules</p>
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Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness • Engaging comprehensively with Institutional stakeholders • Engaging stakeholders effectively, including citizens and service users 	<p>The Council holds its meetings, and those of its committees and Cabinet Portfolio Holders in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality or a relevant exemption applies. The public are allowed to ask questions at all Council and committee meetings.</p> <p>The Council records the deliberation of scrutiny committees and the reasons for Executive and Regulatory decisions and makes agenda papers and minutes available on the Council's website. The Council also records and publishes on the website written questions asked at Council meetings and their answers, and oral questions and answers where these are available.</p> <p>Officers use standard report templates for committee and executive reports to help ensure that readers are provided with information that is accurate, complete and unbiased. Reports make clear the options available so that the implications of all decisions and strategic risks can be assessed before those decisions are made.</p> <p>The Council has a Joint Development Control Committee with the County Council and Cambridge City Council for decisions affecting growth sites bordering South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City.</p> <p>The Council has a clear understanding of the needs of the district, strategically and locally, gathered from an understanding of our communities and the wider sub-region; ability to 'drill-down' to contextualise data which, at district-level, may hide vulnerability</p> <p>The Council uses local intelligence to shape services and partnerships e.g. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.</p> <p>The Council has valued engagement mechanisms in place e.g. agents and parish forums, tenant participation group, Cabinet/Parish liaison meeting</p> <p>The Council tailors its 'offer' to suit customer need e.g. Business Hub, Key Accounts, major developments, demand-led charging structures</p> <p>The Council operates in accordance with principles of partnership working agreed with our key partner organisations.</p> <p>The Council proactively leads local partnerships e.g. monthly multi-agency meetings to share intelligence and take action on issues such as anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping</p>	<p>Committee Agendas</p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>Committee Forward Plan</p> <p>Agendas and Minutes of Committees</p> <p>Council Website</p> <p>Standard Report Templates</p> <p>Terms of Reference of Joint Development Control Committee</p> <p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>Case studies identified in Position Statement 2016 (prepared for LGA Peer Challenge)</p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>Cambridgeshire Compact</p> <p>Terms of Reference for multi-agency groups</p>

	The Council ensures that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff.	Customer Contact Centre, service standards and South Cambridgeshire Hall access.
	The Council promotes the role of Councillors and lets the public know who the Councillors are, what roles they have on the Council and how to contact them.	Council website. South Cambs magazine
	The Council makes clear through its website and other Council publications the services that it is responsible for, how people can contact the Council and the service standards they can expect.	Council website Council Tax leaflet South Cambs magazine
	The Council undertakes surveys of residents to ensure that it has up to date information about their priorities and levels of satisfaction with the Council and its services.	Consultation Panel. Corporate Plan annual consultation and engagement. Statement of Community Involvement
	The Council's consultation programme ensures that the Council proactively seeks the views of a wide range of people and engages with all sections of the community effectively.	Regular customer satisfaction surveys by directorates and associated key performance measures
	The Council seeks to ensure all views are actively considered when making decisions, recognising that it is not always possible to reconcile conflicting viewpoints. The Council ensures it makes feedback available to consultees on the outcomes of consultation, what has changed as a result and explaining how it has reached decisions.	Cabinet reports. Statement of Community Involvement South Cambs Magazine
	The Council undertakes Equality Impact Assessments of all major policies and decisions and takes action to implement changes required, to ensure that council services and policies consider the diverse needs of its service users and citizens.	Equality Implications section in standard report template.
	It has an Equality Scheme covering all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, containing commitments which are aligned to Corporate Plan objectives and reviewed annually.	Completed Equality Impact Assessments published on SCDC website Equality Scheme 2015-2020
	The Council recognises two Trade Unions and holds regular liaison meetings involving the Chief Executive and Head of People and Organisational Development.	Trade Union Agreements

Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining Outcomes Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits 	<p>The Council has a clear vision for the District and sets objectives to guide the Council's activities.</p> <p>It reviews those objectives each year, through Quarterly Position Report and the Corporate Plan and budget planning cycles.</p> <p>The Council proactively contributes to key strategic partnerships, reflecting partnership objectives within its Corporate Plan where appropriate e.g. Health and Well-being, Local Enterprise Partnership, Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority</p> <p>Council ServicePlans assess improvement projects for their economic, social and environmental benefits.</p>	<p>Vision</p> <p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Business Planning Cycle and associated guidance</p> <p>Partnership objectives and websites</p> <p>Service Plans</p>

Principle D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining Interventions • Planning Interventions • Optimising achievement of intended outcomes 	<p>The Council has a Medium Term Financial Strategy to resource its aspirations and to assess and plan for any financial risks. The strategy is reviewed annually.</p> <p>The Council puts service to the public first. The annual business planning process is used to agree the priorities for the Council. The Corporate Plan expresses the strategic objectives for the Council for over the current financial year and beyond.</p> <p>Alongside each of the objectives are detailed the particular outcomes to be achieved and performance measures that provide evidence that the outcomes are being delivered. This information enables members and the services contributing to the delivery of the plan to be clear about the priorities for the Council and assists in decisions about where resources should be focussed.</p> <p>Directors and Heads of Service prepare annual Service Plans indicating how they will meet objectives set in the corporate plan and setting out their priorities and work programmes for the year ahead.</p> <p>The Council's overall spending plans are set out in an annual Budget Setting report for both revenue and capital expenditure.</p> <p>There are arrangements in place for regular budget monitoring and the reporting of significant variances to senior management.</p> <p>The Council works to maximise its resources by delivering services as efficiently as possible, working in partnership with others and using other providers where these are the best options.</p> <p>The Council seeks expertise from outside the authority when it does not have the necessary skills in-house, making use of peer reviews and other mechanisms for ensuring challenge of Council services. The Council has LGA membership.</p> <p>Performance against key Performance Indicators for each service are prepared for and presented to the Corporate and Executive Management Teams and Members to consider necessary remedial action.</p> <p>The Council has established a Project Management Toolkit to set out practical guidance for project managers, and provide standardised templates for consistency across the Council.</p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>Agendas for Cabinet and Council</p> <p>Quarterly Position Reports on Finance, Performance and Risk</p> <p>Service Plans</p> <p>Budget Setting Report</p> <p>Quarterly Position Reports on Finance, Performance and Risk</p> <p>Efficiency Plan</p> <p>LGA Peer Challenge, November 2016 (Position Statement and Final report)</p> <p>Housemark, CIPFA and Rural Services Network benchmarking.</p> <p>Quarterly Position Reports on Finance, Performance and Risk</p> <p>Project Management Toolkit (In-site)</p>

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

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the Council's capacity Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals 	The Council sets out a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Members, other Members and Council Officers in its Constitution.	Constitution
	The scheme of delegation within the Constitution makes clear which matters are reserved for collective decision-making by Council.	
	A Member/Officer protocol is used to aid effective communication between Officers and Members and to clarify their respective roles and appropriate ways of working.	Member/Officer Protocol
	The Council's Chief Executive is its Head of Paid Service responsible and accountable to the authority for its operational management.	
	When working in partnerships the Council ensures that Members are clear about their roles and responsibilities, both individually and collectively, in relation to the partnerships and to the Council.	Partnership Terms of References
	The behaviour expected of employees, and managers, is set out in the Council's competency framework and this is used as the basis for staff performance appraisal.	Corporate Values Management Competency Framework
	The Council's Organisational Development Strategy sets out how the Council will recruit, reward, and develop its employees to reach their full potential.	Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures Organisational Development Strategy
	Employees joining the Council are offered an induction programme and their training and development needs are reviewed regularly through the Council's annual performance review process, which applies to all staff.	Council Induction Programme
	The Council has up-to-date job descriptions. It sets and monitors clear objectives for Officers through the annual performance review process.	Performance and Development Review Scheme
	It agrees appropriate remuneration for officers based on a nationally-recognised job evaluation scheme for the public sector, supplemented with local conventions.	Job Evaluation Scheme Pay Policy
	The Council runs a Leadership Development programme for current and aspiring managers	Leadership Development Programme
	The Council offers all new Members an induction programme and the opportunity to develop, with a briefing and development programme to meet their needs. The Council also provides resources for training, attending conferences/seminars and briefings in-house for all elected Members. It keeps a register of the training received by Members and involves Members in reviewing training needs and the	Member Induction Programme Member Training Programme

	<p>resources available during the year.</p> <p>The Council obliges Members to have appropriate training or briefing before performing certain roles (e.g. dealing with staff recruitment or disciplinary issues, being a member of the Planning or Licensing Committees).</p> <p>The Council has developed Shared Services with their partners, and this helps to build resilience and expertise across partners.</p>	<p>Shared Services Business Cases, service plans and performance reports</p>
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Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing Risk Managing Performance Robust Internal Control Managing data Strong public financial management 	<p>The Council has a Risk Management Strategy, supplemented by procedures and guidance.</p> <p>It undertakes systematic risk assessments in all areas of Council activity, including those covered by Health and Safety legislation.</p> <p>It maintains strategic and service risk registers which are reviewed regularly.</p> <p>The Council ensures that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority; with managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job.</p> <p>Risk assessment is incorporated into the Council's decision making and Members are advised of the Council's risk profile at key stages.</p> <p>The Council respects the personal data of its citizens, employees, suppliers and others. The Council has a Data Protection Policy, and publishes Privacy Notices. The Council has responded to legislative changes, from the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act, and has action plans in place to ensure compliance and to respond to emerging guidance and good practice.</p> <p>The Council respects the privacy of members of the public if it has to carry out investigations under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, and ensures that privacy is only interfered with when the law permits and there is clear public interest justification.</p> <p>The Executive Director (Corporate Services) is the Council's Chief Financial Officer and S151 Officer, responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p>	<p>Risk Management Strategy, Procedures and guidance</p> <p>Risk Assessments</p> <p>Strategic and Service Risk Registers</p> <p>Risk Management Strategy and Guidance</p> <p>Report templates</p> <p>Information Governance Policies / website (Privacy Notice)</p> <p>Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Guidance</p> <p>Constitution and Job Description for Executive Director</p>

	<p>The Council's scrutiny committees undertake constructive challenge to enhance the Council's performance.</p> <p>The Council also has clear protocols about Members' access to information and officer advice to enable them to perform their roles.</p> <p>The Council has emergency and business continuity plans in place, including co-ordination and joint working arrangements with partners.</p>	<p>Constitution / Committee papers</p> <p>Member-Officer Protocol</p> <p>Emergency Plan / Business Continuity plans</p>
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Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing good practice in transparency Implementing good practices in reporting Assurance and effective accountability 	<p>The Council makes sure members of the public have access to information about the workings of the Council. It makes clear what information is routinely published through its Freedom of Information Publication scheme and responds promptly to requests for information. The Council publishes on its website all responses to Freedom of Information requests and has privacy notices and information-sharing agreements to ensure GDPR compliance.</p> <p>Each year the Council publishes a Year-End Position Report and Statement of Accounts giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, performance, future plans and financial statements.</p> <p>Shared services arrangements with other local authorities or partners document their governance arrangements, which are clear, open and accountable.</p> <p>The Council maintains an independent Internal Audit function, with a risk-based annual audit plan, designed to test regularly that the Council's policies and processes operate in practice and that the Council complies with legislation and good practice.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit produces an annual opinion on the Council's internal control environment and the risk management framework to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit Opinion is used to inform an Annual Governance Statement and this is signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.</p> <p>The Council also agrees an annual work plan with its External Auditors to test the Council's response to major legislation and the soundness of its financial and governance processes.</p> <p>Recommendations arising from internal and external audit and inspection processes are used to inform future decision-making.</p> <p>The Major Opposition Group Leader makes an Annual Report to Council.</p> <p>The Council uses an Independent Remuneration Panel to give advice on payments to Members and considers their advice when setting the Members' Allowance Scheme. The Panel's recommendations are set out in a public report to Council. The Scheme is available to view on the Council's website and is subject to regular review.</p>	<p>Publication Scheme</p> <p>Freedom of Information Requests</p> <p>Year-End Position Report and Statement of Accounts</p> <p>Shared Services Collaboration Agreements</p> <p>Risk based internal audit plan</p> <p>Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>Audit and Corporate Governance Committee Terms of Reference, Reports and Minutes</p> <p>Annual Council Agenda</p> <p>Members' Allowances Scheme</p>

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 Corporate Governance Committee for consideration and will form part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.

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 Leader of the Council 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.

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.

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.