
LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present a draft update of the Local Code of Corporate Governance (The Code) for approval (Appendix A). The Council's current version of The Code was adopted in June 2017.

2 LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- 2.1 In April 2016 the Chartered Institute of Public Financial Accountancy (CIPFA) revised its framework and guidance on delivering good governance in Local Government.

- 2.2 Under the framework there are seven core principles (A-G), each with a number of sub-principles. The core principles translate into a range of specific behaviours and actions demonstrating good governance. The Code's seven core principles are as follows:-

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 optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;

E - Developing the Council'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; and

G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

- 2.3 The Audit Committee is responsible for the adequacy of governance arrangements.
- 2.4 The proposed update of The Code, attached as an appendix, continues to be based upon the CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) publication entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016 Edition'.
- 2.5 The proposed version of The Code is more focused on Rochford than the original and is aligned with the Business Plan 2020-2023.

- 2.6 The format of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is already aligned with the structure of The Code and the revised code should assist in simplifying the completion of the AGS.

3 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None. However, The Code is recommended by CIPFA and SOLACE as best practice aimed at enabling the Council to discharge its functions within an appropriate governance framework.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no reportable risks associated with the report, but the assessment of corporate risk is a key component of the Council's governance arrangements.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

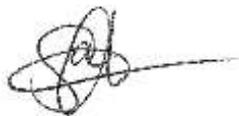
6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups, as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That the appended Local Code of Corporate Governance be agreed.



Angela Law

Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic

Background Papers:-

None.

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

Delivering Good Governance

The Council recognises the importance of good governance in delivering the intended outcomes for residents and service users as set out its Business Plan 2020-2023 (Appendix A). To meet these outcomes the Council has in place arrangements for corporate governance and accountability designed to ensure that it operates in an effective, efficient, and ethical manner.

This Local Code is consistent with the principles identified in The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/ Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) Framework 2016 ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’.

This Local Code of Corporate Governance has been developed to demonstrate how the Council complies with each of the seven principles within the Code (Appendix B). The Code brings together the governance and accountability arrangements which the Council currently has in place and will be reviewed and updated in line with the Business Plan.

Effective corporate governance is achieved by putting in place sound control systems and processes combined with regular compliance checking to make sure those systems and processes are working in practice.

The Accounts and Audit regulations 2015 require the Council to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its systems of internal control through the publication of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This Local Code will assist in the review of governance arrangements and production of the AGS for the Council. The AGS is reviewed and approved by the Audit Committee before it is published in the annual Statement of Accounts.

The Local Code is underpinned by the Council’s Governance Framework which comprises a range of policies, procedures, behaviours, and values by which the Council is controlled and governed. The documents that make up the Framework provide the structures and guidance that Members and Officers should adhere to in order to ensure effective governance across the Council. ([View here](#))

It is intended to:

- stimulate confidence in the activities of the Council and how it goes about its business.
- focus the minds of those involved in decision making on making those decisions in a proper way and engaging local stakeholders.

- assist with the constant improvement of service delivery and minimisation of risk.

Defining Corporate Governance

Corporate governance can be defined as “the systems by which organisations are directed and controlled”. There are three fundamental principles of corporate governance:

Openness: This ensures that all interested parties are confident in the organisation itself. It leads to effective and timely action and lends itself to necessary scrutiny.

Integrity: This is described as both straightforward dealing and completeness. It should be reflected in the honesty of an organisation’s annual report and its portrayal of a balanced view. The integrity of reports depends on the integrity of those who prepare and present them which, in turn, is a reflection of the professional standards within the organisation.

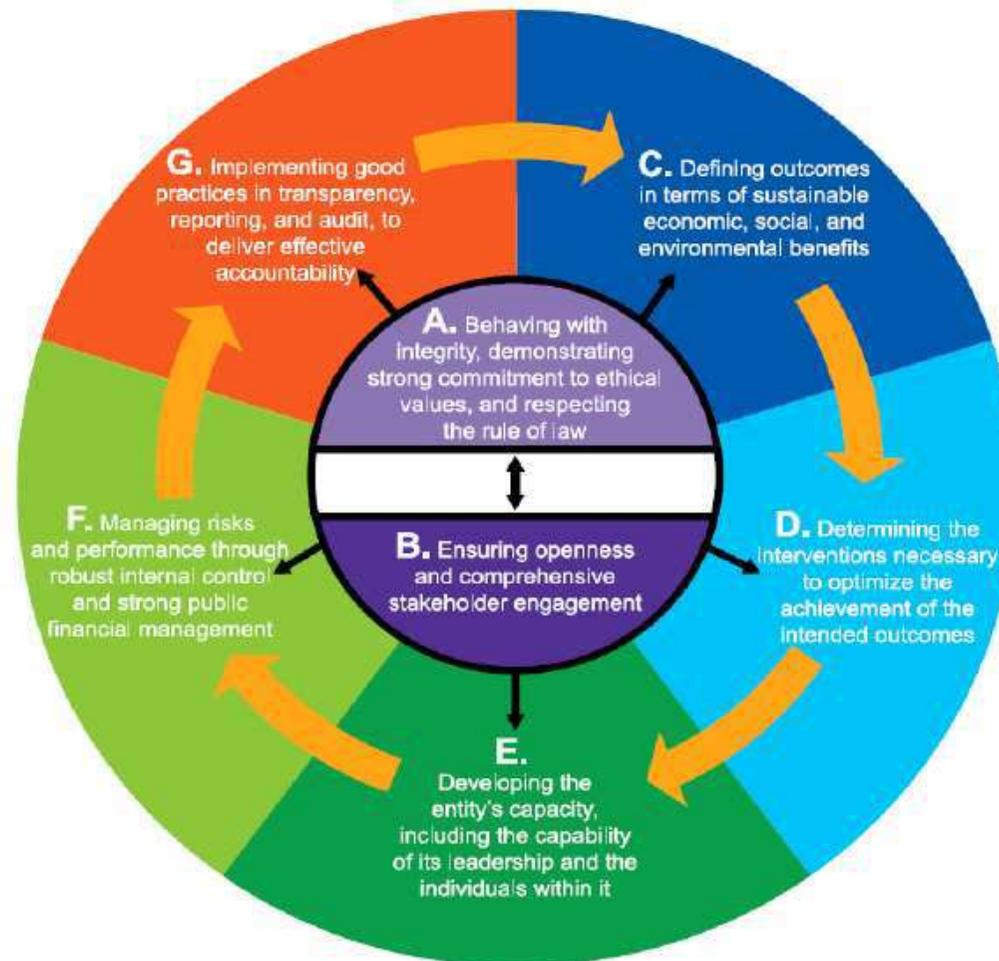
Accountability: This is the process whereby individuals are responsible for their actions. It is achieved by all parties having a clear understanding of those responsibilities and having clearly defined roles through a robust structure. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) defines corporate governance for local authorities as “the systems and processes, the cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities”. The Localism Act 2011 requires councils to have a code of conduct for members.

In 2007, CIPFA/SOLACE published a Framework for Delivering Corporate Governance in Local Government to assist councils to review their governance arrangements and to highlight any gaps. The Framework, which was updated in 2012 and 2016, adapts the core principles of good governance for the local government sector and recommends that all councils should comply with them.

The seven principles identified in the Framework for Delivering Corporate Governance in Local Government (CIPFA 2016) 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 optimise 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 controls and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.



Principles of Good Governance

We hereby certify our commitment to this Local Code of Corporate Governance and will ensure that the Council continues to review, evaluate, and develop the Council's Governance arrangements to ensure continuous improvement of the Council's systems

Signed: **Date:**

Leader of the Council

Signed: **Date:**

Managing Director

BUSINESS PLAN 2020 2023



OUR VALUES

Customer focused: Maximising potential: Proactive: Innovative

OUR VISION

“Working to help shape your future”

OUR PRIORITIES

BEING FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

Despite continued budget constraints, we will manage our resources effectively to ensure we can continue to fund high quality services.

We will invest in the future of the district to stimulate growth and prosperity as well as attracting investors and visitors.

Wherever possible, we will support local business and organisations.

We will improve our efficiency through modernising services and changing the way we work to meet residents' needs.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Strong, vibrant communities are the foundation of strong vibrant economies.

We will focus on early intervention and protection for the most vulnerable.

We will support and invest in community level work which enables everyone to lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.

We will work with partner organisations to tackle inequalities and enable more improvements in well-being to be delivered by communities.

MAXIMISE OUR ASSETS

We will maintain, protect and enhance our many green parks, playgrounds and open spaces; creating greater opportunities for leisure and cultural enjoyment.

We will be more environmentally conscious and strive to eliminate our carbon footprint.

We will work with other councils across South Essex and Central Government to promote the district and create inward investment which will shape our landscape for the future.

ENABLE COMMUNITIES

We will support residents, local businesses and organisations to create a district full of great life opportunities and choices, business growth and economic security.

We will work with partners to build community resilience and public safety.

We will engage with communities to meet our priorities and shape the future of the district.

We will inspire our communities to make a difference.



OUTCOMES



OUR PRIORITIES			
BEING FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE	EARLY INTERVENTION	MAXIMISE OUR ASSETS	ENABLE COMMUNITIES
BY 2023 WE WILL HAVE:			
Provided best value for money for residents by delivering the services that matter most and making decisions to prioritise our limited resources	Continued to work with partners and communities to ensure our most vulnerable residents have felt supported to live well	Adopted a South Essex joint strategic plan and worked with neighbouring councils and Government to protect the District's built and natural environment, supporting both the local and regional economy	Worked with the voluntary, community and faith sectors to build capacity for meeting the needs of residents, working together to make a difference to live better, safer, healthier lives.
Regenerated and invested in more efficient sites for the delivery of council, community and leisure services	Worked together with communities and partners to prevent homelessness	Increased opportunities for residents to enjoy culture and leisure and created a strengthened visitor and business economy across the district	Worked closely with residents, communities and the police to maintain low crime levels and to improve residents' perception of safety
Made use of evolving technology to become more efficient and ensure residents can contact us more easily and access more services on-line	Increased the standard and availability of affordable housing within the district	Protected the district for future generations by recycling and green policies aimed at achieving carbon neutrality by 2030	Worked with businesses and communities to develop plans to achieve and invest in strong, sustainable town centres and high streets
Taken a more commercial approach to generating income through investment of our resources, assets and use of existing council owned companies	Increased the number of residents actively participating in healthier lifestyles	Invested in our green spaces and community facilities to support our growing population's health and well-being	Reduced social isolation through strengthening connections within communities

Core Principles of Good Governance

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<i>Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:</i>	
<p>Principle A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law</p> <p><i>Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.</i></p>	<p>Behaving with integrity This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and officers of Rochford District Council (The Council) will behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated, in accordance with relevant codes of conduct, thereby protecting the reputation of the Council. The relevant codes of conduct as detailed in the Constitution are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Code of conduct for Members ○ Code of good practice for planning matters ○ Protocol for outside bodies ○ Officers’ code of conduct ○ Protocol on Member / officer relations • Members will take the lead in establishing standard operating principles or values for the Council and its staff and that these are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles), <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selflessness ○ Integrity ○ Objectivity ○ Accountability ○ Openness ○ Honesty

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership ● Members and officers will lead by example and use the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions. Where necessary declarations of interest will be made by Members upon election and at relevant Council or Committee meetings to maintain transparency and to avoid potential conflicts of interest. ● In a similar manner Officers are recommended to declare any interests that may give rise to potential conflicts of interest. ● Members and Officers are required to register any gifts or hospitality received that could give rise to perceived conflicts of interest ● Members and officers will demonstrate, communicate, and embed the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively ● Members and officers follow an induction process when joining the Council which details the standards and behaviours that they are expected to exhibit <p>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Council will seek to establish, monitor, and maintain the Council’s ethical standards and performance. ● Members and officers will underpin personal behaviour with ethical values and ensure these permeate all aspects of the Council’s culture and operation. ● Members and officers will develop and maintain robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values, both within the Council and externally. This will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equalities & diversity ○ Value based recruitment ○ Safeguarding and related matters ○ Adoption of modern-day slavery commitment

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health & safety standards ○ Anti-fraud & Corruption standards ○ Climate change awareness ○ Partnership protocol ○ Member development / training programme ○ Contract Procedures Rules ○ Financial Regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members and officers will ensure that external providers of services on behalf of the Council are required to act with integrity and in compliance with the ethical standards employed by the Council above. <p>Respecting the rule of law This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members and officers will demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law and adhere to all relevant laws and regulations. ● Conditions exist to ensure that Members, the statutory officers, and other key post holders, are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements, as specified in the Council’s Constitution and other regulatory guidance that may be in place. ● Members and officers will strive to optimise the use of their powers available for the benefit of residents, communities, and other stakeholders ● Members and officers will deal with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively. This may involve use of the Standards Committee or the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. ● Members and officers will ensure fraud, corruption or misuse of power are dealt with effectively, as detailed in the Council’s anti-fraud & corruption policy and procedures. This would include the involvement of the Police if appropriate. ● Enforcement policies are in place to ensure fairness of approach
Principle B.	Openness

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p> <p><i>Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual residents and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>NB: institutional stakeholders are the other organisations that local government needs to work with to improve services and outcomes (such as commercial partners and suppliers as well as other public or third sector organisations) or organisations to which they are accountable.</i></p>	<p>This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will maintain an open culture through demonstrating, documenting, and communicating the Council’s commitment to openness. • The Council will make 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 a decision confidential shall be provided. • Clear reasoning and evidence for decisions will be provided in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear. All Council or Committee reports requiring a decision at Rochford must consider the implications and impact in respect of, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risk ○ Crime and disorder ○ Environmental ○ Resources required ○ Legal issues ○ Parish issues ○ Equality and diversity ○ Commitment to carbon neutrality in the Council’s estate by 2030 • The Standards Committee comprises of elected members of Rochford District Council, parish representatives and independent persons. As a key function it will promote and maintain high a standard of conduct by councillors and co-opted members. • The Council will use formal and informal consultation and engagement, as required, to determine and deliver the most appropriate and effective courses of action, particularly in relation to significant programmes and projects. • The Council will comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Council and Committee meeting will be made accessible, subject to existing requirements for confidentiality in appropriate cases • The Council will make its website compliant with accessibility requirements <p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will actively engage in the adoption of a South Essex joint strategic plan with neighbouring councils and the Government • The Council will effectively engage with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably • When appropriate the Council will develop and maintain formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively. • Partnerships that may be in place will be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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>Engaging with individual residents and service users effectively This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will establish a clear policy on the type of issues that it will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual residents, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes • The Council will ensure that communication methods are effective, and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<p>engagement, in line with the Communications Strategy and Social Media policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will encourage, collect, and evaluate the views and experiences of communities, residents, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs. • There will be effective feedback mechanisms in place in order to demonstrate how views have been considered,. • Feedback from more active stakeholder groups will be balanced with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity • The impact of decisions on future generations of taxpayers and service users will be taken into account.
<p><i>In addition to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest in principles A and B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:</i></p>	
<p>Principle C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p> <p><i>The long-term nature and impact of many of local government’s responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the Council’s purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including residents, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when</i></p>	<p>Defining outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s Business Plan (2020-2023) is a formal statement of the Council’s purpose and intended outcomes, which provide the basis for the Council’s overall strategy, planning and other decisions with four key priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Being financially sustainable ○ Early Intervention ○ Maximise our assets ○ Enable communities • This details the intended impact on, or changes for, residents, service users and other stakeholders over the course of the Business Plan period. • Outcomes are defined on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available • The Council will identify and manage risks to the achievement of these outcomes, for which performance reporting will be introduced. • The Council will manage service users’ expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p><i>determining priorities for the finite resources available.</i></p>	<p>Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will consider and balance the combined economic, social, and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision. • A longer-term view will be taken 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. • The Council will 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 • The Council will ensure fair access to services
<p>Principle D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p> <p><i>Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a</i></p>	<p>Determining interventions Priority: Being financially sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision makers will receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. This is to ensure that best value is achieved however services are provided. • Feedback from residents and service users will be considered 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, bearing in mind future impacts. <p>Planning interventions This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p>

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p><i>way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust project-based planning and control cycles that cover key strategic and operational plans, priorities and time-defined targets will be established and implemented. • There will be engagement with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered • There will be consideration and monitoring of risks facing each partner organisation when working collaboratively, including shared risks • Arrangements will be flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering services can be adapted to changing circumstances • As part of the Performance Framework, relevant, appropriate performance measures will be developed as part of planning processes in order to identify how the performance of individual services and projects is to be measured. • These performance measures will inform progress against progress of the outcomes of the Business Plan • Procedures will be in place to create and collate information required to report service quality regularly • A medium-term financial strategy will be produced annually, with a rolling five-year projection. This will be subject to ongoing review by the Leadership Team and periodic reporting to the Executive. • The medium-term financial plan and budgets will be aligned with Business Plan priorities and strategies. • Medium- and long-term resource planning will be informed by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy, linked to the Business Plan.
	<p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes This underpins all priorities in the Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will ensure the medium-term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability, and other resource constraints

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budgeting process is all-inclusive, considering the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term • 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 priorities to be achieved while optimising resource usage • The Council will endeavour to achieve ‘social value’ through procurement and service planning
<p>Principle E. Developing the Council’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p> <p><i>Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications, and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole.</i></p> <p><i>Because both individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as</i></p>	<p>Developing the Council’s capacity Being Financially Sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will review operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness. This will include the workplace environment and the way the Council operates. • The Council will use Best Practice comparisons with similar organisations • The Council will utilise the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved • The Council will Develop and maintain an effective workforce plan as part of the Connect Programme, to enhance the strategic allocation of resources. <p>Developing the capability of the Council’s leadership and other individuals Becoming financially sustainable and maximise our assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between elected and appointed leaders will be clearly established within the terms of the Constitution and relevant Codes of Conduct • The Leader of the Council and the Managing Director have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within the Council whereby the Managing Director leads 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

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p><i>well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will maintain an effective Scheme of Delegation that specifies the types of decisions that may be delegated to individual Members and Officers and those that are reserved for the collective decision making of the Council. • Measures will be in place to develop the capabilities of Members and the Leadership Team to achieve effective 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 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensuring Members and officers have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and personal development matching individual and Council requirements is both available and encouraged ○ 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 ○ Ensuring personal and corporate development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external • The Council will consider the leadership’s own effectiveness, ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and external inspections • The Council will engage staff through regular, structured performance reviews which take account of training or development needs, ensuring individual linkage to the Business Plan • The Council will ensure arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of its staff and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing • The Council will continue to ensure that there are structures in place to encourage public participation, through a range of communication mechanisms
<p>Principle F.</p>	<p>Managing risk Being financially sustainable</p>

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p> <p><i>Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities.</i></p> <p><i>A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability.</i></p> <p><i>It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes, and encourages constructive challenge is critical</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management is recognised as an integral part of all activities and will be considered in all aspects of decision making • Within the Risk Management Framework, robust and integrated risk management arrangements will be employed across the Council’s activities and will be reviewed and monitored to ensure that they are working effectively. These will include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate risks ○ Service area operational risks ○ Project risks ○ Contract management risks • Responsibilities for managing individual risks will be clearly allocated • The Council will maintain a business continuity / resumption plan, that will be regularly updated to consider changing environments, to retain the ability to provide services to residents in the event of an incident or emergency. • The Council will maintain emergency planning arrangements with appropriate authorities, agencies, or organisations, which will be regularly updated, in order to support residents or other stakeholders in the event of an incident or emergency. <p>Managing performance Underpins all priorities in Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All services will develop and maintain a Service Delivery Plan, supported by performance measures, linked to the Business Plan which will be used as a tool to monitor service delivery effectively. • Decision making will be based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the Council’s financial, social, and environmental position and outlook • There is scrutiny or oversight function in the Review Committee, which provides constructive challenge and debate on policies and priorities before,

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p><i>to successful scrutiny and successful service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated commitment from those in authority.</i></p>	<p>during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the Council’s performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and the Leadership Team will be provided with regular reports on service delivery plans, key performance measures and on progress towards Business Plan outcome achievement
	<p>Robust internal control Being financially sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Management Framework will be aligned with achieving priorities. • There will be ongoing evaluation and monitoring of risk management and internal control. • The Audit Committee, is independent of the Executive, and accountable to the governing body and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment, including overview of the Annual Audit Plan ○ ensures that recommendations from External or Internal Audit are listened to and acted upon • The Council will maintain an effective internal audit service that complies with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and ensuring that recommendations are monitored and acted upon. The role and responsibilities will be set out in the Audit Charter that is reviewed and approved by the Audit Committee annually. • The service may have direct access to Members if considered appropriate. • Effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements will be in place and regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.
	<p>Managing data Underpins all priorities in Business Plan</p>

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will maintain its Data Protection Policy and Information Management Procedures to ensure they are up to date and in line with relevant legislation • Privacy notices are in place to advise service users what data will be used to provide services and what rights are available to those service users. These will be subject to review to ensure that the notices are both current and relevant. • Effective arrangements will be in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data in line with relevant data protection legislation. These will be periodically reviewed to ensure appropriate standards are maintained. • Effective arrangements will be in place and operate effectively when sharing data with other bodies <p>Strong public financial management Underpins all priorities in Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will hold and maintain up to date Financial Regulations that reflect an ever-changing environment, combining effective controls within effective operational requirements • The Council will hold and maintain up to date Contract and Procurement regulations that reflect an ever-changing environment, combining effective controls within effective operational requirements • The Council will ensure that financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short term financial and operational performance • The Council will ensure that robust financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control.
<p>Principle G.</p>	<p>Implementing good practice in transparency Underpins all priorities in Business Plan</p>

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
<p>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</p> <p><i>Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the Council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code • The Council will continue to comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act • Reports for the public and other stakeholders will be produced in a standard, fair, balanced, and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate. • A balance will be struck between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and permit public scrutiny, while not being too onerous to provide, and for users to understand. <p>Implementing good practices in reporting Underpins all priorities in Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and the Leadership Team own the performance outcomes reported. • The Council will report at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders, in a timely and understandable manner. • An Annual Governance Statement will be produced in conjunction with the Financial Statements. This will include an evidence-based assessment of the extent to which the principles contained in this Code have been applied, including an action plan for improvement if required. • This Code will be applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate • Performance information, that accompanies the financial statements, in line with the Performance Framework will allow for comparison with other, similar organisations as appropriate.

Core Principles	Sub-Principles
	<p>Assurance and effective accountability Underpins all priorities in Business Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opinion of the level of assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and internal control will be provided annually by the Chief Audit Executive. This in turn will feed into the Annual Governance Statement • Recommendations for corrective action that may be made by External Audit in respect of financial management or value for money, will be monitored and acted upon • As part of continuous improvement, peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies are welcomed and relevant recommendations arising, if appropriate, will be implemented. • Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement • Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met