Local Code of Corporate Governance

1. Introduction

The Council is committed to ensuring good governance principles and management practices are adopted in all business activities. This Local Code of Governance provides a public statement that sets out the way in which the Council will meet and demonstrate that commitment. It includes the systems, policies and processes as well as the culture and values that underpin arrangements for effective:

- Leadership
- Management and performance
- Delivery of positive customer outcomes
- Community engagement
- Stewardship of public money

The Code was last updated in June 2012 and following the publication in April 2016 of the new framework and guidance, it has been reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Accordingly, this Code has been developed in accordance with the new and revised 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE[1] framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". However, much of the content is the Council's own as it continues to develop and shape its own approach to governance, taking into account the environment in which it operates. Whilst the adoption of a Local Code is not a statutory requirement, it represents best practice and is a key element of the Council's overarching governance arrangements.

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[1] CIPFA is the Chartered Institute for Public Finance Accountancy and SOLACE is the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

2. Core principles of good governance

The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework sets out the following seven core principles and various supporting principles on which good governance is based and forms the basis of the Council's Local Code of Governance. The Council's high level commitment is also included:

Core Principle	Sub-Principle	High Level Commitment
Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:	*Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice are illustrated in the bullet points:*	
Principles A & B permeate implementation of Principles C to G		
A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law	Behaving with integrity	The Council's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect. Appropriate policies and procedures are developed to embed these principles.
	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Shared values, including leadership are in place for both the Council and its staff. The values reflect public expectations and are communicated to members, staff, the community and partners/stakeholders.
	Respecting the rule of law	Defined and published standards which detail the expected conduct of members and officers across Council services and functions. Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.
B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Openness	An embedded culture of transparency, openness and honesty.
	Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	An ongoing assessment is made of the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required.
	Engaging with individual citizens and service	Ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the

Core Principle	Sub-Principle	High Level Commitment
Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:	*Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice are illustrated in the bullet points:*	
	users effectively	community, partners and stakeholders and these operate effectively.
In addition to the overarching requirement for acting in the public interest in Principles A & B, achieving good governance in local government also requires effective arrangements for:		
C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Defining outcomes	Focussing on the purpose and ambitions of the Council and on outcomes for the local community.
	Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Regular review of the Council's goals and aspirations and the implications for the Council's governance arrangements and economic, social and environmental benefits.
D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Determining interventions	Published annual report which communicates the Council's activities, achievements, financial position and performance. Interventions required are indentified through these reports.
	Planning interventions	Performance, audit, risk and financial reporting are used to identify areas of concern and plan for interventions.
	Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	The development of SMART community outcomes underpinned by business plans and outcome focused business activity.
E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Developing the entity's capacity	Clear vision, strategy and direction underpinned by strong and effective leadership and management.
	Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	Recruitment and retention of high performing staff, partners and providers.
F. Managing risks and	Managing risk	Embedded risk management processes which are linked to corporate plan outcomes

Core Principle	Sub-Principle	High Level Commitment
Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:	*Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice are illustrated in the bullet points:*	
performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management		and priorities.
	Managing performance	Performance targets set in line with national benchmarks and best practice. Outcomes are regularly monitored and reported to stakeholders.
	Robust internal control	Preventive controls in place include segregation of duties, approval/authorisation processes, security of assets, reconciliations and audits, etc.
	Managing data	Robust information governance standards and training to all staff.
	Strong public financial management	Budget reports linked to outcomes, audited accounts, budget holders are accountable.
G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability	Implementing good practice in transparency	Transparency, accountability and integrity are interconnected concepts which are demonstrated through the governance framework.
	Implementing good practice in reporting	Comprehensive consultation process for published reports ensuring members and senior management own the contents.
	Assurance and effective accountability	Ensuring that agreed recommendations for corrective actions made by internal and external audit are fully implemented.

3.   What is governance?

The governance framework brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, good practice principles and management processes. It comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the local community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives.

Good governance and financial arrangements provides the Council with a solid foundation on which to build its programmes of work and services and to deliver against the aspirations of this Council and its residents. This means it can demonstrate the best value for money in achieving the right outcomes for customers giving special consideration to those who may be vulnerable or hard to reach".

4.   How important is it?

South Kesteven recognises that good governance relies on high standards of probity and stewardship and the Council has a strong reputation for delivering this year on year, when the local community's expectations are always increasing.

The Council's governance framework seeks to position the attainment of sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes as a key focus of its strategic objectives. This focus and the links between good governance and sound financial management are crucial – the Council recognises that it has a responsibility to more than its current residents and stakeholders and must take account of the impact of current decisions and actions on future generations.

Furthermore, it is important that the framework is applied in a way that demonstrates the spirit and ethos of good governance which cannot be achieved by policies and procedures alone. Shared values that are integrated into the culture of the Council and are reflected in behaviour and policy are hallmarks of good governance.

5.   How does it work in practice?

The Local Code of Governance brings all these practices together into one document and makes them open and explicit. It identifies areas where further action is required to meet changing circumstances and/or to ensure that the Council follows best practice in all aspects of governance. The revised Code will be reviewed and tested annually and will support the Annual Governance Statement prepared for the financial year 2016/17 onwards.

The following section shows in detail how the Council applies the seven principles of good governance by setting out its commitment to the behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice, including the key elements of the framework and areas for improvement.

Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

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

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 and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
Behaving with integrity	
We have defined and communicated the standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and employees through various policies, procedures, codes of conduct and protocols. We have also established systems and processes to ensure that they continue to operate effectively in practice. In particular, we have put in place arrangements for individuals to raise concerns where they believe that these values and behaviours are not being lived.	Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation. • Codes of conduct • Induction for new members and staff on standard of behaviour expected • Member development programme • Members' information bulletin • Performance framework • Register of interests • Registers of Gifts & Hospitality • Standing Orders & Financial Regulations • Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules • Counter Fraud Strategy • Anti-Money Laundering Policy • Whistleblowing policy • Feedback procedure • HR policies

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
We have developed and maintain shared values, including leadership values, for both the organisation and employees that reflect public expectations. We have communicated these values to Members, employees, the community and our partners.	Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles). Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions. • Communicating shared values with members, staff, the community and partners • Corporate Plan • Decision making practices • Declarations of interests made at meetings • Conduct standards at meetings • Shared values guide decision making • Principles of conduct standards embedded in committee structures
We have put in place arrangements to ensure that all key systems and processes (financial and otherwise) are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and we monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.	Demonstrating, communicating and embedding 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. For example: • Counter fraud and corruption policies are working effectively • Up to date register of interests (members and staff) • Up to date register of gifts and hospitality • Whistleblowing policy is in place and protects individuals raising concerns • Whistleblowing policy has been made available to members of the public, employees, partners and contractors • Feedback procedure and examples of responding to complaints about behaviour • Changes/improvements as a result of complaints received and acted upon • Members and officers code of conduct refers to a requirement to declare interests • Minutes show declarations of interest were sought and appropriate declarations made • Quarterly Assurance Statements submitted by all business areas
Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	
We have put into place arrangements to ensure that Members and	Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
employees behave in accordance with the Council's ethical standards and are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.	
We are committed to the highest ethical standards in everything we do and every effort is made to ensure that this commitment permeates all aspects of the Council.	Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation. • Unlocking our Potential initiative • Induction training and awareness for new staff • People Strategy to provide a specific focus
Where appropriate, all policies and procedures are developed and maintained, having regard to agreed ethical values.	Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values. • Appraisal processes take account of values and ethical behaviour • Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules • Competence and behaviour based recruitment process • Use of policy acceptance software
The Council will ensure that all significant external providers act with integrity and comply with the highest ethical standards reflecting the Council's own high standards.	Ensuring that 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. • Protocols for partnership working
Respecting the rule of the law	
The Council is committed to the rule of law and adherence to all laws and regulations underpinning its work. The corporate governance framework brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, good practice principles and management processes. This is reviewed annually as part of the production of the Annual Governance Statement.	Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.
The Council ensures that members and officers are able to fulfil the full range of their duties and responsibilities in accordance with all	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.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
relevant legislative and regulatory requirements as underpinned by the corporate governance framework.	• The Monitoring Officer carries responsibility for legal and regulatory compliance. The Monitoring Officer is required to report to Members should any proposal, decision or omission give rise to unlawfulness/maladministration • Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (CIPFA, 2015) • Committee, legal and financial services support • Job description/specifications and training plans
We actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on the Council but also strive to utilise our legal powers to the full benefit of the community. The Council is committed to looking at different and better ways of doing business and is already capitalising on a more "relaxed" legal framework - more recently the general power of competence introduced by the Localism Act 2011.	Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders. • Procedures are in place to identify and implement new and changing legislation • Advice of Legal Services • Members and officers are involved in new initiatives – reports, member workshops, minutes of meetings etc • Membership of relevant professional networks
The Council's corporate governance framework is key to ensuring that any reported or known breaches or incidents of corruption or misuses of power are dealt with quickly and effectively.	Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively. Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively. • Record of legal advice provided by officers • Statutory provisions • Effective anti-fraud and corruption policies and procedures • Local test of assurance (where appropriate) • Whistleblowing policy

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

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 citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
Openness	
The Council is accountable to local people and institutional stakeholders and is committed to an open and transparent culture and sharing its vision for the future with the local community. The Council seeks to ensure that local people, businesses and other stakeholders are included and involved in formulating priorities and in the decisions that are made. We will continue to publish performance information that gives information on the Council's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements. We will also continue to publish information about outcomes, achievements and service user satisfaction – and in alternative formats upon request. We have developed and maintain a clear policy on how employees and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision-making. This is achieved by example: Trade Union consultation, staff surveys, staff suggestion scheme, regular staff newsletters and open door approach with managers, etc. We hold Council meetings in public, unless there are good reasons for confidentiality, and we allow the public the opportunity to speak.	Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness. 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 a decision confidential should be provided. Providing 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. Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/courses of action. - Corporate Plan and other strategic documents - Annual report, including performance information - Freedom of Information Act publication scheme - Up to date and informative Council website - Citizens' panel and service specific consultations - Publications – SKToday, Skyline and Parish updates - Authority website – access to minutes and agendas - Tenants' conferences - Social media - Meetings held in public within the constraints of legislation regarding the consideration of exempt and confidential information - Record of decision making and supporting materials - Decision making protocols - Report proformas - Record of professional advice in reaching decisions - Meeting reports showing details of advice given - Discussion between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Agreement on the information that will be provided and timescales • Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports is adhered to • Consultation and engagement strategy • Communications strategy and customer access strategy • Use of consultation feedback • Citizen survey • Member "call in" procedure • Annual report on the work of the Scrutiny Committee

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

We take an active and planned approach to dialogue with our stakeholders and with accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate outcomes whether directly by the authority or in partnership.	Effectively engaging 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. • Communication policy • Consultation framework
We have put in place enhanced mechanisms to evaluate the outcomes against joint plans and priorities to ensure the arrangements are fit for purpose. The views of the local community are obtained on the effectiveness of these arrangements.	Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively. • Database of stakeholders with whom the authority should engage and for what purpose and a record of an assessment of the effectiveness of any changes • Joint risk registers • Collaborative working arrangements with neighbouring councils
All strategic partnerships are embodied in a partnership agreement that covers plans, priorities and outcomes plus joint working, etc.	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 • Partnership Policy

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Partnership agreement • Annual Report
Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users	
We have established a clear policy on the types of issues that the public and service users will be consulted on. This includes providing a feedback mechanism to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	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. • Corporate Plan • Consultation and engagement strategy • Communications strategy • Customer access strategy • Record of public consultations • Partnership framework • Community Focus Forum
We will continue to ensure that clear channels of communication and access to information are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders. Members and officers are clear about their respective responsibilities. These arrangements are subject to regular review to ensure their effectiveness.	Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement. • Communications strategy
As above plus the Council will continue to support the existing diversity forums and encourage their participation in decision making practices. We recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities.	Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs. • Communications strategy • Encouraging feedback via the Council's website and other publications
Our policy ensures that all stakeholders receive feedback through various mechanisms. We are committed to ensuring that all residents and stakeholders are kept up to date and we will use comments and feedback to inform Council policy and practice.	Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account. • Communications strategy
Our policy ensures that a balanced approach is taken and this is	Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
reflected in the feedback and outcomes.	inclusivity. • Processes for dealing with competing demands within the community, for example a consultation
In developing its corporate plans, the Council is mindful of the need to proactively plan for the future in order to sustainably accommodate the projected growth in population and the increase demands on local services.	Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and service users. • Various corporate strategies and plans eg economic development • Corporate plan is forward looking

In addition to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest in Principles A and B, achieving good governance in local government also requires effective arrangements for:

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

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 authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

Defining outcomes	
We have determined and published our vision and long term priorities for South Kesteven. We have developed a long term strategy for the local area with our partners. It is based on consultation with local people about the sort of place they want the area to be. The strategy co-ordinates the actions of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Our corporate planning framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of our community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.	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. Vision used as a basis for corporate and priority planning: • Corporate Plan • Annual Report • Partnership policy • Economic Development Strategy • Customer Access Strategy

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
We have established a range of performance indicators used to measure progress against our key priorities which are reported to Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and monitored by Management through its Performance and Project Board. We have established arrangements to ensure that financial resources are directed to our priorities.	• Project delivery documentation and plans • Quarterly performance monitoring reports to Executive and Scrutiny • Monthly Reporting to the Management Team • Project Management toolkit and training • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Treasury Management Strategy • Revenue budget process • Quarterly budget monitoring and forecasting • Establishment of a robust project and performance office
We are committed to ensuring that all residents and stakeholders are kept up to date and we will use comments and feedback to inform Council policy and practice in the short and medium terms.	Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer. • Community engagement and involvement • Community strategy • Customer feedback process • Customer access strategy • Corporate complaints procedure • Citizen's Panel

Our external auditors provide an annual assessment on how well we are managing the resources the Council has available and delivering value for money to achieve better and sustainable outcomes for local people.	Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.
	
	• Regular reports on progress
	  – External Audit Annual Governance Report
	  – External Audit Annual audit letter
	• Annual report on certification of claims and returns

We have established arrangements to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption. We have developed arrangements to ensure that critical service delivery can be maintained or recovered during an emergency	Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes. • Performance trends are established and reported upon • Risk management framework and risk registers • Counter Fraud Strategy • Whistleblowing Policy (Confidential Reporting Code) • An internal audit function which is alert to the risk of fraud and corruption when reviewing the

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	Council's systems and processes • Fraud Response Plan • Anti-Money Laundering Policy • Engagement with the Cabinet Office National Fraud Initiative • CIPFA Counter Fraud and Corruption Tracker • Business Continuity Plans • Emergency planning arrangements • Business Continuity Annual Report • Risks regularly monitored
There is a strategy that formalises what we can do to ensure that we make the most of the resources available to continue to improve services and provide positive benefits for the local community.	Managing service user's expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available. • Processes for dealing with competing demands within the community • Consultation with residents to assess which services are valued most • Efficiency Plan • Citizen's Panel

Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

This is central to the Council's overall strategic planning framework which looks at priorities, plans and aspirations over the short term (1 year) medium term (4 years) and the more longer term (over 4 years). We consider the views of local people and other stakeholders to help shape future plans. We also take account of external factors such as the direction of Government policy and market intelligence etc	Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision. Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints. 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 appropriate trade-offs. • Economic development strategy • Local and Corporate plan • Medium Term Financial Strategy

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Capital investment plans are structured to achieve appropriate life spans and deliver strategic outcomes or that resources (eg land) are spent on optimising social, economic and environmental wellbeing • Discussion between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making • Consultation framework
The Council works closely with its partners to ensure that all members of the local community, especially the most vulnerable, are able to access local services.	Ensuring fair access to services. • Where appropriate, policies and protocols ensure fair access and statutory guidance is followed • Equality Impact Assessments carried out for all proposals/policy changes

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

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. 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 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 continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

Determining interventions	
The Council uses a range of mechanisms to ensure that informed decisions are made in the wider public interest and best value is achieved. These include, option appraisals business cases, project management, cost/benefit analysis and risk management, etc. Performance and progress are closely monitored at project groups and at other relevant forums and with members – either "informally" (away days, "next steps" approach) or in committee	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. • Discussion between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making • Option appraisals • Risk management framework • Dedicated performance and programme management support
An integral part of the decision making process described above is the active involvement of all residents and stakeholders. This	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

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
informs the Corporate Planning process where priorities are set and competing demands are considered over the short, medium and longer terms	within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts. • Local Plan • Corporate Plan • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Citizen's Panel and service consultations
Planning interventions	
The Council adopts a structured approach to strategic and operational planning as part of an annual cycle. This does not preclude important issues being considered at any time, eg considering the impact of new government legislation.	Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets. • Forward calendar of dates for developing and submitting plans and reports that are adhered to • Dedicated performance and programme management support
We have established a clear policy on the types of issues that the public and service users will be consulted on and how resulting actions are planned and delivered. This includes providing a feedback mechanism to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered. • Communication strategy • Citizen's Panel • Feedback procedures
The ongoing assessment and management of shared risks are key to the successful operation of each partnership and in protecting the Council's interests. The Council's risk management framework is used as the basis for assessing risks.	Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks. • Partnership framework • Risk management protocol • Partnership risk registers • Project risk registers
The Council's planning processes are flexible and dynamic so that they can respond immediately to changing circumstances.	Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Corporate Plan • Dedicated performance and programme management support
We measure performance by reference to priority themes and project plans that feature in the Corporate Plan. Performance/outcomes, including KPIs, are reviewed by managers and Management Team on a regular basis and reports are considered by Members at Policy Development Group and Scrutiny meetings.	Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured. • KPIs have been established and approved for each priority element and included in work plans and are reported upon regularly and accessible to managers • Dedicated performance and programme management support
The Council has established a projects and performance office that coordinates information for performance monitoring and review by managers and members – with the help of an information management system.	Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly. • Reports include detailed performance results and highlight areas where corrective action is necessary • Dedicated performance and programme management support
The Council is committed to delivering annual balanced budgets that are linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Corporate Plan ("the golden thread")	Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan. • Budgets, plans and objectives are aligned to the Council's priority themes
The Council's MTFP is reviewed annually in accordance wit the Corporate Plan and realistic and up to date estimates of revenue and capital expenditure and the statement of balances.	Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy. • Budget guidance and protocols • Medium term financial Strategy • Corporate Plan

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

In preparing and updating the MTFP, a detailed analysis is undertaken that looks at priority themes, competing demands, affordability, Government funding and income from other sources. It also looks at investment initiatives, etc.	Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints. • Medium Term Financial Strategy

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Feedback surveys and exit/decommissioning strategies
The Council is clear on the importance of taking into account the full cost of services and operations, particularly when looking at different service delivery models that might be adopted in the future.	Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term. • Budgeting guidance and protocols
During periods of uncertainty and budget restraint, the Council is acutely aware of the need to pro-actively consider possible changes in the business environment in which it operates. It can then assess the likely impact on decisions affecting the delivery of its priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan.	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. • Medium Term Financial Strategy
The Council is committed to achieving social value in all areas of its business and the additional benefits to be derived are being considered in more detail as part of the corporate and priority planning process. It is already a feature of our commissioning and procurement policy and our partnership with Procurement Lincolnshire.	Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' 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". • Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules

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

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their 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. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

Developing the entity's capacity

The Council has put into place various processes and mechanisms to ensure that assets remain fit for purpose and business	Reviewing operations, performance use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
operations deliver the required outcomes in accordance with strategic objectives. In addition, the Council launched various initiatives considering different models which encouraged members and officers to consider the ongoing effectiveness or otherwise of services compared with alternative delivery models.	• Regular reviews of activities, outputs and planned outcomes • Performance framework • Flexible organisation
In many areas of the Council's business, benchmarking and other comparative studies are used to assess and/or provide assurance that the required outcomes are being delivered efficiently and effectively. In addition, the Council is actively looking at what additional powers (Localism Act 2011) have been granted to help it consider new and different ways of using its resources to achieve the right outcomes.	Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently. • Utilisation of research and benchmarking exercises as appropriate • Asset Management Plan
The Council recognises the value and importance of collaborative working and partnerships. To this end, we have put in place enhanced mechanisms to evaluate the outcomes against joint plans and priorities to ensure that the arrangements are delivering added value.	Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved. • Effective operation of partnerships which deliver agreed outcomes • Collaborative working with others • Professional networking groups
Workforce planning is an integral part of the processes underpinning the production of the MTFP and the Annual Budget. Plans and priorities inform the use and deployment of human resources to ensure we have the right number of staff and the right skills.	Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources. • People strategy

Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

We have produced a documented framework that sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. This framework sets out the roles and responsibilities and	Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained. • The Constitution and Constitution Committee • Member/Officer Protocol

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
accountability of: the Cabinet, the Leader and other Members as well as senior officers and of the leadership team and its members individually; • Policy and Performance Panels, which advise Cabinet and Council on its policies, budgets and service delivery; • The committees established to fulfil the Council's regulatory and other functions. We have documented protocols governing relationships between members and officers. We have clearly defined the relative roles and responsibilities of Members and senior officers – which is reinforced at Corporate Induction.	• The Council Constitution – Scheme of Delegation • Dedicated website section 'your Council and Democracy' has specific information on Member role profiles • Corporate training and development programme which includes members and corporate induction
The Council has put in place a scheme of delegation that sets out how decisions are made within the Council both at officer and member level. For example, some functions are delegated by Council and the Cabinet to committees and officers, whereas others are reserved for decision by full Council as detailed in Local Authority Functions (England) Regulations.	Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body. • Council's Constitution • Scheme of delegation reviewed at least annually in the light of legal and organisational changes • Financial regulations which are reviewed on a regular basis
The Chief Executive is responsible for and accountable to the Council for all aspects of operational management. For strategic leadership and management, the Council has put in place protocols for establishing and maintaining effective communication between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and with members. We ensure that when Members are working in partnerships they are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the Council.	Ensuring the Leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Chief Executive leads the authority 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. • Council's Constitution • Protocol on member/officer relations • Clear statement of respective roles and responsibilities and how they will be put into practice • Partnership protocol awareness training is available for Members
We ensure that the Council's statutory officers (S151 and	Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice

Monitoring Officer) and other officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are understood throughout the Council.
 	
The Council ensures that members and officers receive both induction training and continued professional development so that they maintain their skills and knowledge to effectively perform their duties.
 	
The Council regularly assesses the skills of members and officers with regard to their responsibilities, including governance to enable them to perform their roles effectively.
 	
We develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance and learn from experience, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge, and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed.
 	
We ensure that arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole.
 	
We ensure that career structures are in place for Members and officers to encourage participation and development.
	leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:
	
	– ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is 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, organisational and system- wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external
	
	• Member and employee induction programmes
	• Member training as required
	• Staff and member training and development programme including elearning linked to annual appraisals. For example, for Members this may include the ability to:
	  – scrutinise and challenge
	  – recognise when outside expert advice is required
	  – promote trust
	  – work in partnership
	  – lead the organisation
	  – act as a community leader
	• Leadership and development programme for managers
	• Access to update courses/information briefings on new legislation
	• Dedicated democratic support to provide guidance to members
	• Behavioural framework in placed for managers
	• People Strategy
	• Reports from inspectorates and regulators
	• Publication of the Constitution on the intranet and Council website
	• Joint training with other councils for both Members and Officers
	• Members Scrutiny and Policy Development Handbook

There are structures and robust mechanisms in place to ensure that the Council's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are	Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice

developed in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders (including partnerships) and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.
 	
We have established arrangements to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to, and participate in the work of the Council. This extends to encouraging new talent from prospective members of the Council.
	• Corporate Plan
	• Four Priority themes
	• Communities and stakeholders are consulted and encouraged to engage through:
	• Residents' survey
	• Community focus forum
	• Stakeholder consultation
	• Neighbourhood Groups
	• Tenants' conferences
	• Community Engagement (eg council tax payers, business community)
	• Communities and stakeholders are kept in touch through:
	  – Council magazine SKToday
	  – Council's website
	  – Council's partners' websites
	  – Stakeholder groups
	  – Strategic partnership frameworks
	  – Citizen's Panel
	  – Community Fund

The Council has adopted a positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge. Members accept that this will help to improve performance in all areas of the Council's business. They strongly believe that listening and responding positively to customers, peers and external bodies is important as is learning from feedback.	Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections. • Member induction • Peer reviews • External inspection reports/findings • Group Leader's meeting
The Council's performance management framework ensures that all members of staff are regularly held to account, having regard to ongoing learning and development needs.	Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs. • Training and development plan • Staff development plans linked to annual appraisals and regular one to one meetings • Implementing appropriate human resource policies through the People Strategy and ensuring that they are working effectively

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
The Council's People Strategy is built around a series of values and behaviours, including effective communications and team building. One of the five inter-related themes underpinning this strategy is "supporting the wellbeing of our people" so that they can maintain a good work-life balance.	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. • People Strategy • Behavioural framework • Health & Safety training • Wellbeing programme • Suite of change management policies • Access to information, training and activities in the workplace to support wellbeing and keep the work place safe

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

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 crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities. 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. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is 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 to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

Managing risk	
The Council has put in place an effective risk management system which is being embedded across all areas of business activity and in all decision making processes. This includes business continuity and integrated emergency management, health and safety, and security. This is continually being developed. Members and officers at all levels recognise that risk management is an integral part of their jobs.	Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making. Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively. Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated. • Risk Management Framework and Protocol

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Corporate and Business Risk Registers • Risk management system is used to monitor and respond to outstanding actions • Partnership risk registers • Project risk registers • Significant partnerships each hold an individual risk register • Member and officer training on risk management • The member report template contains a section to consider the 'risk implications' of any decisions • The Governance and Audit Committee receives regular updates on corporate risks • Regular reviews of operational risks • Business Continuity Plans • Health & Safety policies and procedures • Quarterly Assurance Statements from all business areas
Managing performance	
We have established and are continuing to develop, sound systems for providing good quality management information for performance measurement and to inform decision making. The Council sets standards upon which services are delivered/measured and monitors and reports on performance/outcomes. This ensures that the Council makes the best use of resources and best value is achieved.	Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review. • Performance/outcomes, including national and local performance measures are reported to senior management and Members on a regular basis • Annual Performance report • Benchmarking information where relevant • Performance Management framework • The Council publishes a schedule of decisions listing key decisions to be taken • Corporate feedback process
We always seek to provide information, analysis and advice that is fit for purpose to enable members and officers to make informed and transparent decisions. This includes ensuring that decision-makers are provided with a clear assessment of organisational risk covering legal, financial, social, environmental and technical, together with their implications. We provide training to Members to ensure that we have a strong basis for quality decision-making especially for quasi-judicial committees.	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. • The member report template requires information to be provided explaining the legal, financial and other implications of decisions, as well as implications for each of the corporate priorities. Appendices may include business plans, project plans, financial modelling as appropriate • Reports are sent to decision-makers with the agenda of meetings on a timely basis • Publication of agendas and minutes of meetings

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
We have an established Scrutiny Committee to provide an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and debate that enhances the Council's performance.	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 organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible. • Scrutiny Terms of Reference • Scrutiny Annual Work Plan • Agendas and minutes of Scrutiny Committee meetings • Annual report on the activities of the scrutiny committee • Policy Development Groups • Training for members
Annually and in-year (where appropriate) the Council publishes information on its vision, strategic plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements, governance and the satisfaction of service users.	Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement. • Corporate Plan • Summary of Accounts • Annual Report • Customer feedback
We have a long established policy, planning, monitoring, performance review and reporting framework underpinned by robust procedures. In all areas of the Council's business, this measures the effectiveness of outcomes relative to objectives and decisions made, having regard to customer feedback. More specifically, for example, we publish performance information on the Council's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements. We also publish information about outcomes, achievements and service user satisfaction.	Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (eg financial statements). • Corporate Plan and Annual Performance Report • Medium Term Financial Strategy, Annual Budget and Financial Outturn/Statements • Priority plans and service outcomes • Capital strategy and capital outcomes/use of assets • Project management and project outcomes • Procurement and value for money in the purchase of goods and services • Reports to Scrutiny Committee

Robust internal control

As part of the Council's overarching governance arrangements, we have put in place integrated risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function, which	Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the objectives. • Risk management framework

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
are continually being developed. Members and officers at all levels recognise that focussing on good governance, including risk management and internal control is an integral part of their role. The Council maintains appropriate financial standards and regulations and ensures compliance with these.	• Audit plan • Audit reports • Internal audit monitor the effectiveness of risk management • Standing Orders and Financial Regulations • Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget framework • Contract and Procurement Procedure rules
The Council's risk management arrangements provide for the review of risk registers on a regular basis and the results of this and the outcome of reviews of governance at service/business unit level are reported to senior management and the Governance & Audit Committee.	Evaluating and monitoring the authority's risk management and internal control on a regular basis. • Risk management framework/policy has been formally approved and adopted and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis • Assurance statements • Internal audit reviews
The Council maintains effective counter fraud and corruption arrangements and always investigates suspected or indentified fraud. The Council has also put in place robust procedures for contractors, partners and members of the public to raise concerns. We have established effective, transparent and accessible arrangements to deal with complaints.	Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place. • Compliance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption) • Money Laundering policy • Tenancy fraud sanctions • Whistleblowing procedures • Corporate Customer Feedback process
We have an internal audit function that provides a continuous audit of the Council's activities in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. It examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the risk management and control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.	Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor. • Three year Internal Audit Strategy • Annual Internal Audit Plan • Internal Audit assignment reports • Internal Audit progress and follow up reports • Internal Audit advisory reports • Overview undertaken by Governance and Audit committee

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
We have a long established a Governance and Audit Committee (GAC). The Committee is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions. Its terms of reference are consistent with the latest CIPFA guidance on Audit Committees.	Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body: – provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment – that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon • The Council Constitution • Governance and Audit terms of Reference – complies with best practice. (Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (CIPFA, 2013) • Minutes of committee meetings • The s151 officer has direct access to the Governance & Audit Committee and External Audit • Chairman's Annual Report to Council on work activity of the committee • Training for new members and on specific issues
Managing data	
The Council recognises that it has a responsibility both legally and morally to manage its data effectively and protect/safeguard its information assets from all threats, whether internal or external, deliberate or accidental. To this end, it has put in place a number of policies to protect this data having regard to integrity, confidentiality, availability and risk management: risks of handling data, particularly when held on computer or transmitted across networks.	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data. • Acceptable use of IT Policy • IT security policies • Data protection policy and procedures • Access control policy • Information management protocol • Publication scheme
The arrangements set out above extend to the sharing of data with other bodies.	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies. • Data sharing protocols
Relates to quality checks and validation procedures	Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
	• Programme and performance management office review performance information

Strong public financial management

Underpinning the delivery of our corporate plan and 4 priority themes is the ethos of a well run Council which includes effective financial management to achieve efficiencies and savings in the short and medium terms. The Strategic Director Corporate Focus as the s151 Officer appointed under the 1972 Local Government Act carries overall responsibility for the financial administration of the Council.	Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance. • Financial management supports the delivery of services as well as securing good stewardship • Annual Report • Section 151 officer is a professionally qualified accountant and has direct access to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and other executive Members as well as direct access to the Governance & Audit Committee and external audit • The Council has established robust arrangements to manage its finances, including a Medium Term Financial Strategy, quarterly and annual budget processes and compliance with CIPFA's Codes and Guidance on a Prudential Framework for Capital Finance, Treasury Management and the management of reserves etc
Financial management is a key element of the structures and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements. As such, it is fully integrated with other important elements which transcend all areas of the Council's business, including planning, decision making, performance management, risk management etc	Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls. • Corporate planning • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Budget and financial management • Risk management and control frameworks • Performance management framework

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

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 organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
Implementing good practice in transparency	
The Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and employees. We have a commitment to openness and transparency in all our dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so. We ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders and we monitor these to ensure that they are operating effectively. Every effort is made to ensure that information is concise and easily understandable to all sections of the community.	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. Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand. • Communication Strategy • Council website • Council minutes and agendas • Staff weekly newsletter (Evolve), public magazine (SKToday), Council tenants' magazine (Skyline) • Consultation toolkit available for formal consultation arrangements • Informal consultation arrangements include contact via our website and magazine based customer surveys • Neighbourhood groups • Tenants conferences
Implementing good practices in reporting	
Annually, we publish performance information that gives information on the Council's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements. We also publish information about outcomes, achievements and service user satisfaction. Also, we report on adherence to the Local Code of Governance.	Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources. • Annual Performance Report • Annual Governance Report (External Audit) • Annual Internal Audit Report • Annual Governance Statement • Annual financial statements
All reports are considered and approved by the senior management team and by the relevant committee. All members have access to published reports.	Ensuring members and senior management own the results. • Council Constitution • Scheme of Delegation • Performance management framework
The Council is committed to delivering good governance. The	Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
principles and management practices set out in the Framework are adopted throughout the Council and subject to continuous review and improvement. The Annual Governance Statement provides an overview of the Council's key governance systems and explains how they are tested and the assurances that can be relied upon to show that the systems are working effectively. It also includes an action plan for improvement.	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). • Annual Governance Statement
The Framework is applied to all business activities on whatever basis the service is delivered.	Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate. • Annual Governance Statement
The Council is committed to publishing information on its performance in a timely manner. Accordingly, the Annual performance report is published in the autumn of each year and where appropriate, includes comparative data.	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. • Annual performance report • Financial statements • Format follows best practice • Dedicated performance and programme management office

Assurance and effective accountability

We have developed robust procedures to respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors. We have an effective internal audit service in place that reports direct to the Governance & Audit Committee on all aspects of its work, including the tracking of recommendations.	Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon. Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon. • Action plans developed in response to external inspections • Recommendations have informed positive improvement • Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit • Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards • Tracking system in place to monitor compliance with Internal Audit actions • Private meetings held with both Internal and External Audit with Governance and Audit Committee

Our commitment and what we are doing	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice
The Council welcomes peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies. It also participates in national benchmarking exercises to obtain comparative data on performance and to help drive up performance.	Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations. • Recommendations and comparative data have informed positive improvement
We have established arrangements to ensure that services provided, whether directly or by contractors, partners or the voluntary sector, are delivered to a high standard. The Council ensures that, appropriate governance arrangements are in place, including risk management, reflecting the Council's own governance arrangements.	Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the Annual Governance Statement. • Contracts and service agreements • Partnership risk registers • Annual Governance Statement • Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules
Our significant partnerships have been identified with protocols to ensure appropriate accountability and governance arrangements are in place. In particular, we ensure that members and officers working in partnerships are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership, the Council and the wider community.	Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met. • Partnership agreement and protocols • Annual Governance Statement