

Local Code of Corporate Governance

Reviewed in October 2023

Reviewed in May 2024

Introduction

1. The Council is committed to upholding the highest possible standards of good governance. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance is based on the CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. The Framework sets out the core principles and sub-principles of good governance that should underpin local authorities' governance arrangements. The Council has developed and maintained this Code of Corporate Governance which demonstrates how the Council's governance arrangements work towards meeting the Framework principles of good governance. These standards are designed to ensure that we conduct our business in accordance with the law and that public money is properly accounted for, as we work to achieve the best outcomes for our residents.

What do we mean by Governance?

2. Governance refers to the ways in which an organisation is governed and to what purpose. It encapsulates policies, procedures, the way in which decisions are made and how decision-makers are held to account¹.
3. “Governance is about how organisations ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely inclusive, open, honest, and accountable manner. In the case of local authorities, it comprises of the systems and processes for the direction and control through which they account to, engage with and lead their communities.”² Croydon Council has chosen to define Governance as “Doing the Right Thing”.
4. ‘The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector’ defines ‘governance’ as comprising the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.
5. Effective governance in the public sector encourages improved decision making and efficient use of resources. Effective governance is characterised by robust scrutiny, which provides important pressures for improving public sector performance and tackling corruption. Effective governance can improve management which leads to better service delivery and ultimately, better outcomes.

Principles of Good Governance

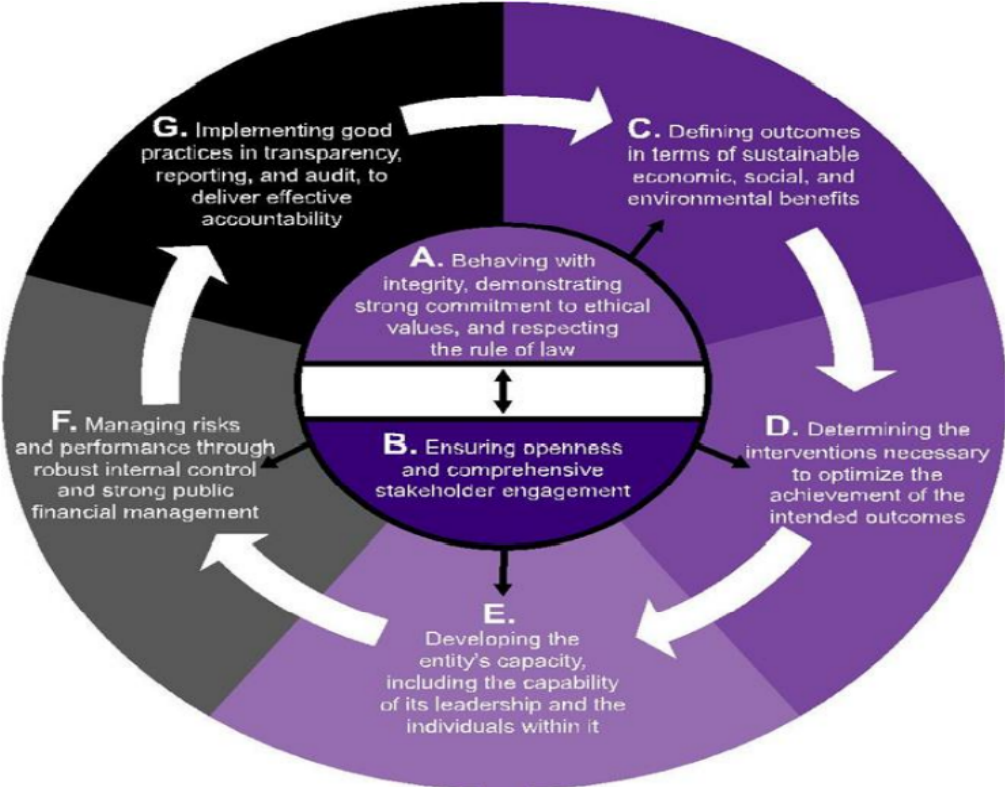
6. There are seven principles of good governance as set out in the Framework which are:-
 - A) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law;
 - B) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;
 - C) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits;
 - D) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;
 - E) Developing the capacity of the entity, 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.
7. The diagram below, taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) (the ‘International Framework’), illustrates these principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other. The

¹ [Addressing cultural and governance failings in local authorities: lessons from recent interventions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

² ‘CIPFA/SOLACE, Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – 2007’

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

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



8. The table below identifies the Council’s governance arrangements that includes rules, policies, procedures, protocols, practices, and values and how they align with and meet the seven principles of good governance.

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE	
THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS THAT DEMONSTRATES GOOD GOVERNANCE	
Principle & sub-principle	Council's governance arrangements that include rules, policies, procedures, protocols, practices and values
A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.	
Behaving with integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Constitution sets out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of members and key officers individually and collectively whilst defining the organisation's approach putting this into practice. This includes the roles of the Ethics Committee and the Monitoring Officer, who are responsible for promoting and developing high standards of conduct Council wide.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Whistle-blowing Policy and associated training supports all members and officers (including temporary staff and contractors) to report concerns about malpractice on a confidential basis to the Council.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are required to register interests and gifts/ hospitality: the register of members' interests and gifts/ hospitality is published on the council's website and members are required to declare their interests at meetings. Officers are required to submit declarations of interests and a register is published on the council's website on a quarterly basis of gifts and hospitality offered to officers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Members Code of Conduct and Officer Code of Conduct and Protocol on Staff-Member Relations detail required standards of behaviour that all members and officers are required to comply with and how they are expected to work together.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a zero-tolerance policy towards bribery and has introduced an Anti-Bribery Policy to ensure compliance with the Bribery Act.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has adopted an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy to help ensure a robust approach to investigating and combating fraud and corruption.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Member Development Programme includes training for Members on their roles and responsibilities in relation to integrity and conduct.
Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon Council has an agreed set of 5 Corporate Values which all officers and members are expected to adhere to. Croydon has also adopted the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon Council has an Equality Policy Statement detailing our commitment to equality and our expectations of all colleagues, members, and relevant third parties. The Equality Strategy 2023 to 2027 sets out the actions the Council will take to tackle and address inequality. The Equality and

	<p>Inclusion Programme Manager provides expert advice and guidance in relation to the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty and other requirements of equalities legislation</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Members Code of Conduct and Officer Code of Conduct detail required standards of behaviour that all members and officers are required to comply with.
Respecting the Rule of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for advising on the correctness and propriety of the Council's decisions and the Director of Legal Services provides advice to ensure that council decision-making follows relevant regulations and legal processes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's decision making is informed by legal and financial advice to ensure compliance with the rule of law.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon Council's Scheme of Financial Delegation lays out the responsibility and accountability of officers for financial matters. The Council also delegates non-financial decisions through a series of schemes of delegation and management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Constitution includes a set of Financial Regulations and Tenders and Contracts Regulations to help ensure that the authority operates within a prudential financial framework. Overall, the Constitution ensures that the Council adheres to the rule of law in the conduct of its business.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The statutory roles of the Head of Paid Services, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer are clearly defined within the Constitution.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon has a Chief Financial and Section 151 Officer (CFO), whose core responsibilities include those set out in the CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the CFO in Local Government. The CFO reports directly to the Chief Executive and is a member of the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CFO is responsible for ensuring that budget calculations are robust, reserves adequate and in accordance with CIPFA guidance. The CFO also has a line of professional accountability for finance officers within the Council and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate management accounting systems, functions and controls are in place and kept under regular review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Health and Safety Policy sets out aims, roles and responsibilities and performance standards. Each department details individual responsibilities and arrangements for implementing the policy.
	<p>B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports and decisions of the Cabinet, Council and its committees are published online. Executive decisions are subject to the call-in process by Scrutiny and Overview Committee and backbench

Openness	councillors to enable them to raise any concerns they may have. Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings are webcast, and an archive of meetings is available for reference.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations processes allow the submission of Freedom of Information requests.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council publishes a Forward Plan of key decisions which are due to be made in the month ahead.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Constitution sets out the Council's governance and decision-making arrangements and is published online.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Council actively publicises its purpose, vision, objectives and intended outcomes in the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-26
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Accounts Report provides the financial backdrop to the past achievements of the Council, future plans and forward strategy. As part of this document, the Council publishes its accounts to communicate the authority's activities, achievements, its financial position, and performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the Council's financial objectives, assumptions and plans over the medium term.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Audit and Governance Committee produces an annual report on its work.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scrutiny and Overview Committee and its sub-committees conduct regular reviews and holds the Executive Mayor to account. The Audit and Governance Committee with an independent Chair focuses on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Croydon Observatory provides access to demographic and other information about Croydon". It is an information sharing, mapping, and reporting website. Information and data on this website can be used by local government, community and voluntary sector organisations, partnership members, businesses, students, and the public.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Council's Equalities Strategy 2023 – 2027 and Equalities Policy Statement sets out the Council's commitment to equality and its aims and objectives. An Equalities Impact Analysis is also completed to inform service design and decision-making whenever a new policy, procedure, project, strategy, function, or savings proposal is considered or a change is proposed, which will impact on people with one or more characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 	

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon’s Local Strategic Partnership supports partners to coordinate priorities and actions across the borough. • The Health and Wellbeing Board, One Croydon Partnership and Safer Croydon Partnership support strategic partnership working in health/ wellbeing and community safety services. • The Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership coordinates the arrangement for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children in the borough. • The Croydon Safeguarding Adult Board is responsible for coordinating the arrangement for the safeguarding adults with care and support needs in the borough.
Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Council undertakes a Budget Consultation exercise each year which gives residents and businesses the opportunity to shape the annual budget. • The Council undertakes residents’ surveys to engage with and get the views of residents and service users. • The Council works to ensure all corporate communications are readily available to those that require them. The Council’s website is designed and written to exceed legal accessibility standards and to facilitate assistive technologies and tools in order to provide information in ways to suit our diverse customer base. • The Council’s ‘Get involved’ platform hosts all of the Council’s consultation and engagement activities and prompts services to ensure that consultees are informed about the outcomes of consultation exercises. The Communications and Engagement team ensure that consultations posted on the platform are appropriately designed and publicised • Croydon provides an interpreting and translation service when required. • The Council has a Corporate Complaints Procedure and annual reports to Scrutiny demonstrate improvements made in response to complaints received. The Council also learns from feedback from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman.
C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor’s Business Plan 2022 – 2026 sets out the strategic direction, outcomes and supporting priorities aimed at delivering a sound and sustainable local government services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Croydon Transformation Plan 2024-2029 sets out how the Council will change as an organisation up until 2029 to make things better for everyone in Croydon • The Improvement and Assurance Panel Exit Strategy Objectives provide a framework against which to drive further improvement and resolving the Council’s outstanding challenges.

Defining Outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council publishes annually its Medium-Term Financial Strategy that includes the financial framework for the next 4 years in the context of its priorities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council maintains a capital programme setting out the Council's longer term investment requirements linked to policy priorities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has an Equalities Strategy and Equality Policy Statement which sets out the Council's commitment to equality, its aims and objectives. An Equalities Impact Analysis is also completed to inform service design and decision-making whenever a new policy, procedure, project, strategy, function or savings proposal is considered or a change is proposed, which will impact on people with one or more characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010
Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports brought to Cabinet, Council and its committees for decision are required to identify any implications arising from the proposal including social, economic, and environmental.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Social Value Policy 2019-23 sets out how social value is embedded in the commissioning process and includes measures to be used in contract specifications. The Contract and Tender Regulations include a requirement that a minimum of 10% of quality evaluation criteria assessments must be allocated for social value.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Local Plan sets out the spatial vision for the borough and, supplemented by planning policies, gives the framework for the Council's work with stakeholders to shape the built environment to deliver economic, social and environmental outcomes identified within the Council's plans.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a Performance Management Framework which sets key targets and produces performance monitoring reports for Cabinet and Scrutiny in relation to the Mayor's Business Plan 2022-26. This is published online and includes performance quality measures, use of resources and value for money.
D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievements of the intended outcomes.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor's Business Plan (MBP) Delivery Plan sets out the progress on the priorities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Improvement and Assurance Panel Exit Strategy Objectives include an Action Plan and progress update is regularly reported.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All reports brought to Cabinet, Council and its committees include consideration of delivery of the Council's outcomes and priorities and options, risk, legal, financial, equality and other implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is monthly budget monitoring report to ensure the Council is effectively managing resource allocation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council recognises Unison, GMB and Unite for the purposes of representing the workforce and facilitating delivery of its priorities. The Council’s formal consultation arrangements are set out in the Staff Consultation and Trade Union facility arrangements.
Planning interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council’s performance management framework sets key targets to evidence delivery of the objectives within the five outcomes detailed in the Mayors Business Plan. Performance reports are supplied to DMT’s and CMT monthly and report to Cabinet quarterly. It sets standards for performance management within directorates and teams. Under performance is reviewed at CMT.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transformation CMT monitors delivery of key transformation programmes and projects, including savings targets within the approved budget and MTFs to enable action to be taken against non-delivery where required.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croydon has prepared contingency arrangements including a disaster recovery plan, business continuity plan and arrangements for delivering services during emergency situations such as adverse weather conditions.
Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council, Cabinet, and committees receive regular reports on performance monitoring to demonstrate the level to which intended outcomes are being achieved and any interventions planned to address non-performance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council’s risk management processes and procedures are designed to help ensure that risks to delivery of intended outcomes are appropriately mitigated
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal audit monitors and reports on the quality and effectiveness of the Council’s governance, risk management and controls and Audit and Governance Committee provides independent assurance of the risk management framework and associated controls, informed by the reports of external audit.
E. Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.	
Developing the entity’s capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The People and Cultural Transformation Strategy sets out the Council’s actions to attract, recruit and retain talent, improving equality, diversity and inclusion and developing leaders and managers. https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/people-and-cultural-transformation-strategy.pdf
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Workforce Strategy also includes arrangements to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Council. Approximately 45% of full-time members of the workforce are from the local community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council’s Appraisal scheme is used to set stretching objectives for officers that are linked to team, departmental and corporate objectives as set out in the Mayor’s Business Plan, the Improvement & Assurance Panel Exit Strategy, and the Future Croydon Transformation Plan 2024-

	<p>2029. The Appraisal process is also used to assess the skills and competencies needed by officers to enable them to fulfil their roles fully</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mandatory for all new starters to complete the Council Induction Programme (Inspire) which has been tailored to meet individual needs: this is supported by a manager’s dashboard and checklist to ensure all required induction elements are addressed • Croydon Council has a Member Development Programme which includes arrangements for member induction and supports members to take control of their own learning and development. Mandatory training is provided for members of regulatory committees. • Both Members and officers can access the Croydon Learning Pool which provides access to e-learning and other development resources
Developing the capability of the Council’s leadership and other individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon Council has a Member Development Programme which includes arrangements for Member induction and supports Members to take control of their own learning and development and to develop their capabilities. • A Learning and Development Board supervises the expenditure of centralised training budgets to ensure that resources are targeted towards statutory responsibilities and delivery of the Croydon Renewal Plan. • Staff networks for Racial Equality, Disability, LGBT+ allies, Mental health and wellbeing, Women and Working carers are sponsored by members of the leadership team and others, providing network members with personal and career support.
F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	
Managing risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Audit and Governance Committee seeks assurance on arrangements for the internal control and risk management environment within the organisation and makes recommendations. It receives reports relating to whistleblowing, anti-fraud and corruption and oversees the work of internal and external audit. • The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the proposed decisions and decisions of the Executive and makes appropriate recommendations. • The Council’s Risk Management process is designed to identify, assess, and manage significant risks to the Council’s objectives. The process includes corporate, departmental (via JCAD system) and project risk registers (via Verto system) and appropriate training delivered to risk owners. • The Corporate Management Team reviews the corporate risk register red risks monthly and Audit and Governance Committee reviews the ‘red’ risks on the corporate register every second meeting.-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Resilience Team and Corporate Resilience Board are focused on emergency planning, business continuity preparedness and response capability in line with the Civil Contingencies Act and associated guidance. The Council also chairs the statutory multi-agency Borough Resilience Forum.
Managing performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's performance management system sets key targets and reports on performance monitoring to Cabinet. It sets standards for performance management within directorates and teams.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with the Members Code of Conduct is monitored under the direction of the Council's Ethics Committee.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Appraisal system enables the consistent setting and monitoring of performance against individual targets.
Robust internal control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Statutory Officer Group provides a forum for the Council's statutory officers to share concerns and risks related to potential serious issues affecting the Council's governance or financial performance and their statutory roles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for providing independent assurance of the Council's control environment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scrutiny and Overview Committee is responsible for holding the Executive to account.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit routinely assesses the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk management and controls. This assessment is fed back to Services and Divisions and responded to as required.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Control Boards (ICB) – The ICBs operate alongside the respective departmental structures providing governance over cross departmental matters. The minutes all go to CMT.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each ICB has terms of reference and includes membership from each directorate management team and other officers and is allocated corporate strategies to own on behalf of the Council. The ICBs can also act where appropriate as a 'Programme Board' in the overall Project & Programme Management Framework for cross-departmental pieces of work, with highlight reports, exception reports, plans and logs being reported to these meetings.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Whistle-blowing Procedure allows officers to anonymously raise concerns about malpractice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Governance arrangements give the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Internal Audit direct access to the General Purposes and Audit Committee and External Audit 	

Managing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon’s Council has an internal Information Management Team (IMT) whose practices are overseen by Croydon’s Chief Information Officer and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO). This team manages and maintains appropriate Policies, Guidance, security measures etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Information Management Internal Control Board (IMICB), includes the Chief Information Officer and SIRO, oversees the management of risks associated with information and data management and delivery of plans for training and improvement. The Board also oversees the development of information security and information management policies, reporting to the Corporate Management Team.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of Croydon’s new starter induction there is a mandatory Information Management training course, and officers are required to complete a refresher on an annual basis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When introducing new processes or amending a current procedure a Privacy Impact Assessment must be completed, which has IMT’s oversight. Reports to Cabinet, Council and its committees are required to identify whether the proposal has any implications for processing personal data and/or any data protection implications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon’s Information Management ICB meets Bi-Monthly to review and discuss any appropriate concerns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council uses industry leading technologies to protect its data, with security solutions modelled on ISO/IEC27001, the international standard for information security management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Officer Code of Conduct states that failing to observe data protection requirements may amount to a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Council’s disciplinary procedure
Strong public financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Croydon has a Chief Financial and Section 151 Officer (CFO), whose core responsibilities include those set out in the CIPFA’s Statement on the Role of the CFO in Local Government.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spend Control Panel oversees all expenditure decisions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Contracts and Commissioning Board provides strategic direction for all procurement and commissioning activities across the Council and the Procurement Board oversees daily activity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures give a clear transparent framework for managing the Council’s financial affairs, and Contract and Tender Rules ensure compliance with procurement legislation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cabinet receives monthly budget monitoring reports.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny and Overview Committee scrutinises budget proposals in terms of their deliverability and impact on the Council’s objectives. The Committee also routinely receives budget monitoring reports.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All proposals considered by Cabinet, the Council and its committees include a statement of financial implications, cleared by the Chief Finance Officer.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for considering the Council’s arrangements for financial management and to recommend any actions accordingly. It receives regular reports such as internal audit plans and risk management arrangements and it approves the Council’s Statement of Accounts and Treasury Policy.
G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.	
Implementing good practice in transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s Constitution publishes how its affairs will be conducted and how residents can get involved. It includes rules on access to information.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council webcasts its public meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Members’ and Officers’ Codes of Conduct, supported by Declaration of Interest Guidance provide arrangements for members and officers to declare any potential or actual conflicts of interests.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Governance Statement provides an annual report on the Council’s arrangements for financial and internal control as well as managing risk and identifies areas for improvement and associated actions. This is published on the Council’s website.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council publishes all payments over £500 and procurement card transactions monthly, and the remuneration details of the Corporate Management Team and directors in the annual Statement of Accounts and on its website.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council publishes a Forward Plan of key decisions which are due to be made in the month ahead and its scrutiny workplan.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s Pay Policy and gender pay gap are published on its website
Implement good practices in reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet and Scrutiny and Overview Committee receive regular reports on budget, performance, and risk.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports from the independent chairs of adults and children’s safeguarding boards are considered by Cabinet.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Officer Code of Conduct and the Members Code of Conduct define the standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and officers.

Assurances and effective accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HR Handbook includes all HR-related policies and procedures, including appraisal, probation, discipline, capability, and absence management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation can be seen to be encouraging openness and honesty within the Whistle-blowing Procedure, this allows officers to anonymously raise concerns about malpractice. This is supported by a programme of Guardians who provide staff with a safe space to share concerns about behaviour or culture at the Council.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit provides independent assurances to management on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control, governance, and risk arrangements. The Head of Internal Audit attends departmental leadership team meetings regularly to report on the latest internal audit reports and any outstanding actions from previous audits

9. The Council will annually review its Code of Corporate Governance to help ensure that it matches our evolving corporate strategies, policies, and procedures. Where practice is found to have fallen short, our Annual Governance Statement will identify this, and the action being taken to put it right. The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing compliance with the standards and policies set out in this Code and the implementation of improvement plans related to good governance.