Annual Governance Statement
2019-20

Approved by Council 10 September 2020

Contents

1   Scope of responsibility

Ceredigion County Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also introduces new governance arrangements for public services in Wales. Public bodies are required to carry out sustainable development. It places a well-being duty on public bodies to set and publish well-being objectives designed to maximise their contribution to the seven national well-being goals. They are also expected to take all reasonable steps towards achieving their objectives.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.

A Governance Framework was developed in 2010 and has been revised in accordance with the CIFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. The framework is used to review the governance arrangements on an annual basis.

Following the review and in accordance with the requirements of the Framework a Local Code of Corporate Governance was approved by Council on the 29 June 2017. The Local Code of Governance has been revised and approved by Council on the 19 March 2020

The Local Code of Corporate Governance brings together in one document all the governance and accountability arrangements the Council has in place. The Code is based on best practice guidance set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

The 2020/21 Code is due to be reviewed further to take account of changes to governance due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The framework is based on the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) and the following seven principles:

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

B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

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

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

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

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

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

This statement explains how the Authority has complied with the seven core principles and sub-principles contained in the framework and in our Local Code of Corporate Governance.

This statement also meets the requirement of The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

2 Assessment of the effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework

Ceredigion County Council is committed to demonstrating that it has the necessary corporate governance arrangements in place to perform effectively.

The Leader of Ceredigion County Council provides clear strategic direction and the Constitution clearly defines the roles of Councillors and Officers. Internal and External Audit, Ethics and Standards Committee and the Audit Committee are committed to ensuring the governance arrangements are effective and robust.

Ceredigion County Council has conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance against the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance Framework (2016). The review involved member/officer workshops and included the following Members: the Chair and Vice Chair of Audit Committee, the Audit Committee Lay Member and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee. In addition, the Monitoring Officer, Corporate Manager - Internal Audit, S151 Officer, Corporate Lead Officer - ICT and Customer Services, Corporate Lead Officer - Economy & Regeneration, Corporate Lead Officer - Policy & Performance, Corporate Lead Officer - Democratic Services, Corporate Performance & Improvement Officer and the Corporate Manager - Partnerships and Performance also took part. During the workshops each behaviour was introduced and scored against a scoring mechanism, as follows:

1/2 Unacceptable Immediate action required

3/4 Below satisfactory - urgent Action Required (within 3-6 months)

5/6 Satisfactory - Action Required (before end of year 9-12 months)

| 7/8 | Acceptable Minor adjustments may be required |
| 9/10 | Good - overall Governance considered to be good and meets best practice no further action required |

The review of effectiveness conducted at officer level was also informed by managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment and also by comments made by the external auditors, other inspection agencies, Leadership Group and Corporate Lead Officers. The review framework was presented to Audit Committee in January 2019.

The effectiveness of the governance framework draws on evidence and assurances from:

- Internal and External Audit and Inspection
- Financial Controls
- Risk and Performance Management
- Legal and Ethical Standards
- Corporate Directors and Other Senior Management, including the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer
- The Audit Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committees

In addition, the Corporate Manager - Internal Audit undertakes an independent review of the Annual Governance Framework and the method of scoring and evidence, on an annual basis. The last review of the 2018/19 Framework was dated 22 May 2019 and presented to Audit Committee on 17 July 2019, which provided high assurance that there was a sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place. The 2019/20 review is currently still in progress, due to the pandemic.

The Council has drawn together a Local Code for Corporate Governance which sets out the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that code and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Local Code for Corporate Governance is available on the Council's website at www.ceredigion.gov.uk

3   Corporate Governance Achievements for 2019-20

The Local Code for Corporate Governance sets out the Local Authority's commitment to the principles of good governance. The following paragraphs outline the Corporate Governance achievements during 2019-20.

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

- The Constitution has been the subject of a further monitoring and review during 2019-20 with a revised edition being published on the Council's website in June 2019. This now requires a further revision.
- CeriNet has been developed to include information for new starters, the Employee Handbook, Corporate Managers and Head Teachers Toolkit and access for staff to arrange Learning and Development information and opportunities. The Well-being & Improvement Objectives Annual report 2018-19 was published on the 31st October 2019 and included a review of the Well-being Objectives.
- An Audit of Ethics carried out by Carmarthenshire County Council was presented to Audit Committee in July 2019.
- Training on equality and diversity and recruitment and selection including equal opportunities is mandatory for all Ceredigion County Council managers.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement:

- A Helping us to Help You Survey was completed to give a voice to citizens on the future of service delivery.
- An Equality and Engagement officer has been appointed to co-ordinate the Engagement Policy and Strategic Equality Plan.
- All consultations are made available on the Council website.
- Consultations are promoted through Social Media.
- The Well-being & Improvement Objectives Annual Report 2018-19 was published on the 31st October 2019.
- The Annual Improvement Report 2018-19 did not make any formal recommendations for improvement.
- Protocol for access by Cabinet Members to Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved by Council (Part 5 Document M2 Constitution).
- Council / Cabinet report template updated to include reference to legal implications, staffing implications, property / asset implications and risks.

- A review of the Community Safety Partnership was undertaken in 2019 and was subject to scrutiny.
- Worked in partnership with Local Authorities and Public Services across Mid and West Wales on the review of our Strategic Equality Plans. A joint question set and engagement and consultation framework was produced and as a result, feedback was obtained from people with protected characteristics.

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

- The Well-being and Improvements Objectives Annual Report 2018-19 was published in October 2019.
- A public engagement toolkit has been developed in accordance with the National Principles of Public Engagement.
- The Risk Management Policy and Strategy and the Risk Management Framework was approved by Council on the 24 September 2019.
- Risk Management training rolled out to Members and Senior Managers and an e-learning package is to be developed for officers and staff.
- Updates on the budget savings and the work of the Development Group are reported to the Cross Party Transformation and Efficiency Consultative Group.
- The Authority has undertaken the following steps towards the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
  - Prepared Well-being and improvement objectives and a Well-being statement
  - Embedded the Well-being Goals and Sustainable development principal into the business planning process
  - Implemented a new Integrated Impact Assessment tool
  - Established a WFGA group and action plan
  - Continues to monitor the Constitution and update as required
  - Completed the PSB assessment of Local Well-being
- The Integrated Impact Assessment Tool and guidance is available and used to support decision making.

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

- The Integrated Impact Assessment Tool and guidance is available and training has been rolled out for officers and Members.
- Corporate Performance Management Arrangements are in place to ensure achievement of intended outcomes.

- Corporate project management group has been established to formalise project development and management.
- A review of Collaboration Projects is in progress. The review includes a section on assessing risks across collaboration projects.

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

- Members training:
  - Media Training for Cabinet Members: How to handle crisis media
  - Media Training for Cabinet Members: Broadcast skills masterclass with 'live' TV interviews
  - Corporate Project Management & Transformation Workshop
  - Carers' Service
  - Scam Awareness
  - Boosting the Economy Workshops
  - New Delivery Model Workshop
  - Scrutiny Training for Chair and Vice-Chair
  - Full Induction training for a new Councillor
  - Impact Assessment of Brexit on Ceredigion Workshop
  - Dementia Bus Experience
  - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - Budget Workshop scheduled January 2020)
  - Risk Management Training
  - County Lines Awareness
  - Social Media Training
  - E-learning modules are also available to all Members
- Safeguarding Thresholds: A Ceredigion Manager Programme has been developed and implemented. All managers must complete 6 mandatory courses. A range of optional courses have also been developed.
- A further cohort of Managers will undertake ILM Level 4 Leadership & Management programme during 2019/20.
- Senior Managers continue to attend Regional and National Leadership events throughout the year including the Wales Academi Summer School.
- An apprenticeship scheme was developed in 2018/19, the first cohort of apprentices have qualified and have all been successful in gaining employment. A second cohort will start during Autumn 2019 with the addition of one Level 3 opportunity.
- A corporate qualifications panel has been developed. The purpose of the panel is to consider applications from employees for any qualification or award they wish to undertake as part of their career pathway or continuing professional development. This will ensure that

access to funding and support is applied fairly and equitably across the organisation.

- Implementation of the learning and development and performance management modules within Cerinet.
- A number of training courses for staff are available via e-learning modules.
- The Council has agreed to the employment of an Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer to coordinate and promote health and wellbeing within the workforce.
- A Workforce Plan 2017-2021 identified four themes:
  - Engagement and Opportunity
  - Flexible & Agile Workforce
  - Promote a bilingual workforce that will serve the community
  - Leadership and Management development

Progress on actions within the plan is good.

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

- The Corporate Risk Register is a standing agenda item at weekly Leadership Group meetings and presented to each Audit Committee.
- The identified current and longer-term corporate risks presented by the pandemic have been collated and added to the Corporate Risk Register as RO18, which will be regularly monitored both by Leadership Group and Audit Committee.
- The Corporate Risk Management Policy and Strategy and the Risk Management Framework was approved by Council on the 24th September 2019.
- All Corporate Risks are allocated to a Corporate Lead Officer.
- Risks form the basis of Internal Audit's audit programmes of work, as required by the Pentana/MKI audit management software system.
- The Cabinet report template has been expanded to include risks and implications arising.
- The Well-being & Improvement Objectives Annual Report 2018-19 was published in October 2019.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy was updated and approved in February 2018.
- An ICT and Digital strategy was approved by Council in March 2018.
- An Internal Audit Section re-structure was implemented in May 2019. The Section was fully resourced to January 2020.
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- Annual reports are published including:
  - Well-being and Improvement Objective Annual Report (Oct 2019)

- Annual Financial Statement including the Annual Governance Statement (September 2019)

G. Implementing Good Practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability:

- Council meetings are webcast.
- There is a Local Code of Corporate Governance in place.
- The Internal Audit function is headed by a CIPFA qualified Corporate Manager - Internal Audit (CMIA) who has considerable local government experience, supported by a team with appropriate knowledge and skills. Three members of staff currently studying for IIA qualification, and two developing ICT auditing skills.
- The Council publishes an Annual Governance Statement each year.

4 Opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide

The Corporate Manager - Internal Audit prepares an Annual Report which is usually presented to Audit Committee in June. The report sets out the individual and collective outcomes of the audit reviews undertaken during the year, and provides the overall audit opinion of assurance based on this audit work. The assurance provided also takes into account progress in implementing improvements, consideration of the risk register and assurances provided in reports issued by external regulators. The scope of audit work and how the need to constantly reprioritise to ensure sufficient work is undertaken for the assurance is detailed in the report. Due to the pandemic, the Audit Committee of 1 April 2020 was postponed, resulting in a delay in approving the Internal Audit annual reports. These are now due to be presented to the Audit Committee on 7 October 2020. The CMIA has appraised the Chair of Audit Committee of the Service's situation regularly during this period.

Audit Wales (AW) did not identify any material weaknesses in the Council's internal controls in the 2018-19 ISA260 although it was noted that the Audit Committee is still monitoring the ongoing actions required regarding the service due to the long and short-term absences previously experienced within the Section.

The Annual Governance Statement has been the subject of review by AW to ensure that it is consistent with their knowledge and with legislation. In addition, the Internal Audit section undertakes an annual independent review of the Annual Governance Framework and the method of scoring and evidence, as noted in Point 2 above.

The Internal Audit Section undertakes an annual self-assessment of the service using CIPFA's LG Application Note's template at each year-end which was

subject to an external peer review during 2016-17. This external assessment is planned to be repeated every five years, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The resultant improvement plans from these assessments are included in the quarterly Progress Reports presented to Audit Committee and reviewed annually in the Internal Audit Annual Report. The Improvement Plans identify improvements made and planned against the recommendations arising from the assessments, along with the results of the service's Quality Assurance Improvement Programme as required by the PSIAS to ensure the Audit Committee is able to monitor the service's progress.

The Corporate Manager - Internal Audit has concluded in her 2019/20 Annual Report dated 25 June 2020, based on:

- the number, scope and assurances from internal and external reviews and follow-up audits undertaken during the year to 31 March 2020, and

- the acceptance of actions by management (especially those deemed fundamental and significant),

that the Council has a satisfactory framework of governance, risk management and internal controls in place to manage the achievement of the organisation's objectives.

The 2019/20 Annual Report is due to be presented to Audit Committee on 7 October 2020, as noted above.

The Council's Corporate Lead Officer - Customer Contact acts as the Authority's Senior Information Risk Owner and also has responsibility for Data Protection and ICT Security.

The SIRO Forum traditionally included subject matter experts: Eg Facilities, Data Protection, IT Security, Head of IT, Legal, HR and some departmental representation. This meets every quarter to discuss information risk and information management issues.

The current key roles and scrutiny of Information Assets are as follows:

- An IT Security Officer (ITSO) who advises on data security and external advisers and consultants are employed from time to time to test and advise on the Authority's security arrangements.
- An Information and Records Management Officer (IRMO) advises on legal compliance and ensures that policies and procedures are in place and are being adhered to.
- Corporate Data Protection (known internally as Corporate Data Protection / FOI / EIR Group Meeting) meets quarterly and is chaired by the Head of Service Policy (Deputy HOS ICT&CS).
- Annual Reports as required to the Council's Audit Committee.

Additionally:

- ITSO is the Vice-chair of Wales National Public Sector Security Forum (CymruWARP) which meets quarterly.
- IRMO Chairs the Information and Records Management Society Wales/Cymru and arranges events across Wales.
- IRMO is part of the WASPI - Mid and West Wales Quality Assurance Panel.

Following the Governance Framework review, overall governance arrangements are considered to be acceptable or good on the basis that average scores applied were 7/8.

The introduction of the Local Code for Corporate Governance outlining how the Council is committed to the core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework provides guidance to all Members and Officers on the governance agenda.

Regular review of the Local Code of Governance will provide a high level of assurance that the governance arrangements are fit for purpose.

Coronavirus Pandemic

Due to the coronavirus pandemic crisis, all Council offices were closed to the public with effect from 23 March 2020.

In light of the national emergency and urgent situation arising as a result of the pandemic, and in order to protect the Council and the public's interests, in circumstances where the decision is deemed urgent such that any delay would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests, the Council Leader granted temporary delegated powers to the Council's Chief Executive and Leadership Group to make decisions relating to the Council's COVID-19 response.

The decision was made in accordance with part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

The Record of Urgent Decision Notice is available on the Council's website.

The Gold Command forum was set-up immediately to facilitate operations and provide a robust decision-making process from the outset, holding daily virtual meetings.

The Council had a clear vision that every single person, business and service could understand and agree upon in order to ensure Ceredigion succeeded in not only reducing predicted deaths through the first peak but more importantly for any future predicted peaks. This has been actioned in three phases to date:

- Phase 1: Preparedness – Closing down of all non-essential services
- Phase 2: Implementation – Delivering services under lockdown conditions
- Phase 3: Adjustment and long term resilience

Phase 3 provides an adjustment phase from the first two phases to a fourth, recovery phase. To enable this to happen, the adjustment phase must consider three main components that will be critical to dealing with COVID-19 whilst at the same time releasing elements of the lockdown safely and in a controlled and structured manner. The three elements are:

Containment + Isolation + Eradication

As lockdown restrictions are gradually eased and the Welsh Government amends its guidance, the Council is looking at how and when it can recommence its services or how they will be delivered differently. This is documented in a 'Roadmap' on the Council's website.

It is hoped that the business sectors and community groups will also contribute to this roadmap so that there is clarity for all residents of Ceredigion.

Following an initial immediate suspension of public meetings, Council meetings are currently being reintroduced, via a virtual platform.

Members of the public are able to attend the remote meetings by e-mailing the Democratic Services for registration details. A full list of remote meetings are available on the Council website. These meetings are also available on the Council's Facebook page to view.

5   Issues identified for last year (2019-2020)

The following table records the actions that have been taken during 2019-20 to resolve the issues identified in the Annual Governance Statement for 2018-2019:

Issue	Progress to date	Lead Officer	Completion Date
(A1.3) Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions Action: Audit Committee to carry out benchmarking exercise.	A benchmarking exercise will be incorporated into the forward work programme for Audit Committee.	CJ	March 2020
(A2.2) Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values Action: A training needs analysis should be carried out and an action plan to deliver training in 19/20 should be prepared	Audit of Ethics Report presented to Audit Committee 17/7/19. Staff questionnaire circulated in 'Newyddion Ceredigion News 09-08-2019' email to staff to analyse training requirements. Advice requested from Learning & Development Team re compilation and presentation of training module (to be developed once questionnaire responses analysed). Compilation of training module undertaken as project by student placement. Discussed at LG 28/5/19. Compilation of e-learning module discussed with Learning & Development Team 16/12/19.	AR	March 2020

Issue	Progress to date	Lead Officer	Completion Date
(B1.1) Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness Action: Complete the review of the FOI publication scheme	The Council's new webpage for FOI is now live. The new organisational chart for the Council, which provides detailed information on the newly formed Integrated Services Model. This will assist with completion of the Publication Scheme, though co-operation from Corporate Managers is vital for its success.	MNH	March 2020
(B1.4) Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action Action: - Carry out actions to improve engagement activity	An engagement policy and toolkit is in place on the new Ceri net site. A third draft of the new Engagement Policy, *'Talking, Listening and Working Together,'* has been produced and is waiting CLO and CM approval before progressing to LG and taking through the political process. An Equality and Engagement Officer has been appointed to co-ordinate the Engagement Policy and the Strategic Equality Plan in addition to giving policy advice and guidance. The Strategic Equality Plan for 2020 to 2024 has been revised in a draft format. This has gone to Scrutiny and Cabinet and then went out to public consultation between 18/12/19 to 29/1/20. The final draft will go to Cabinet on the 17/3/20. We are aiming to publish the final version by the 31/3/20.	MS	March 2020
(B3.1) Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve individual	A major review of the Engagement Policy has commenced. This will set out how we engage with the people of Ceredigion. This will include the ways in which we inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. A third draft of the new Engagement Policy, *'Talking,*	DD	March 2020

Issue	Progress to date	Lead Officer	Completion Date
citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes Action: – Carry out a review of the Community Engagement Policy	*Listening and Working Together,'* has been produced and is waiting CLO and CM approval before progressing to LG and taking through the political process. The policy is based on the Future Generations Commissioner's *'Spectrum of Public Participation'* and a digital engagement platform, *'Engagement HQ.'*		
(B3.5) Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity Action: To liaise with other LA's to establish Best Practice	We worked in partnership with Local Authorities and Public Services across Mid and West Wales on the review of our Strategic Equality Plans. A joint question set and an engagement and survey framework was produced along with an analysis report The report has helped to inform the revision of the SEP We are building and widening an engagement partnership with the Regional Engagement Group. This includes sharing engagement activities and information to avoid duplication and to increase efficiency, including the use of digital engagement platforms like Engagement HQ and Tractivity.	MS	March 2020
(C1.5) Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available	A review of the Corporate Risk Management Framework has been carried out. The Policy and Strategy was approved by Cabinet on the 24th September and training for Members and Officers was provided in January 2020. The Corporate Performance Management System was introduced during 2018-19 with the 2018-19 business plan reporting going live in October of that year. The resignation of the Database Development	CJ	September 2019 December 2019

Issue	Progress to date	Lead Officer	Completion Date
Action: Complete the Risk Management Framework Review Action: (From 17-18) Introduce a Performance Management system and publish service performance data online including costs per service and value for money data	Officer in early 2019 has had an impact and delayed development, however a new officer is in post good progress has been made with the finance tables which will allow publication of costs and value for money data.		
(D2.3) Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks Action: Audit Committee to receive a paper on a review of collaboration projects. This be followed with an action plan for improvement	A review of collaboration projects has been undertaken under the direction of the Sue Darnbrook, Corporate Director. The review included a section on assessing risks across collaboration projects. The results of the review have been collated and analysed and were presented to Audit Committee on the 5th of February 2020 and will be taken to Cabinet on the 17th of March 2020.	DD	March 2020
(F3.4) Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor Action: Ensure capacity and capability are considered during the	Service re-structure effective from 4/5/19. All IA staff Annual Performance Appraisals undertaken 15/5/19. Draft Audit Plan 19/20 presented to Audit Committee 11/4/19; and final Internal Audit Strategy & Plan 19/20 approved by Audit Committee 17/7/19. Regular internal audit section and staff meetings in place to monitor outcomes and performance.	AR	March 2020

Issue	Progress to date	Lead Officer	Completion Date
impending re-structure of Internal Audit	Three audit staff commencing IIA professional qualification training; and two enhancing ICT audit knowledge. One member of staff left 31/1/2020. Arrangements in progress to ensure least impact on service.		

Note: Any actions not fully completed by the completion date will be carried forward into the 2020-2021 Action Plan

6 Agreed action plan for matters to be considered during 2020-2021

Following the implementation and review of the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering good governance in Local Government Framework (2016) the following issues have been identified for resolution during 2020-2021:

Issue	Action	Outcome	Lead Officer	Completion Date
A1.1 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	Monitoring Officer to continue to advise Members further on the need to declare hospitality/gifts. Monitoring Officer to advise Chief Officers further on the need to declare: close personal associations with other officers members, MO to undertake review of Members holding directorships when appointed onto outside bodies. Update Dispensations forms for Members	Further embedding of behaviour with Integrity	EP	March 2021
A1.4 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	Register of Contracts to be published Delegated decision Register to be published. Continued monitoring of the Mandatory e-learning take up of Whistleblowing module. Currently lower than required. Ethics/Governance training to be offered	Further embedment of Standard Operating principles	EP AR	March 2021

Issue	Action	Outcome	Lead Officer	Completion Date
B1.1 Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness	Complete the Review of the FOI publication Scheme.	Demonstrating commitment to openness	MNH	March 2021
B3.1 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	Complete the review of the Community Engagement Policy to include provisions for how stakeholders are engaged in future.	Improving Community Engagement	MS	March 2021
C1.5 Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available	Manage Service User expectations through Publication of service performance including costs and value for money data	Managing Service user Expectations	CAJ	March 2021

7   Conclusion

The annual governance framework review measured progress against the new CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance Framework (2016) and overall governance arrangements were found to be acceptable or good.

The Council has made good progress during the year with recorded achievements against each of the seven core principles.

The development of a Local Code of Corporate Governance bringing together all the local codes and documents together in one document provides assurance that there are clear governance arrangements in place. This enabled the Council to react swiftly to the threats presented by the coronavirus pandemic at year-end.

The Council has identified a number of minor issues for resolution during 2020/21 and has set these out in an action plan for completion (as above). The actions taken as a direct result of the pandemic will be recorded, as appropriate.

8   Certification of Annual Governance Statement

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness throughout the 2019/20 year and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review. It is acknowledged that the pandemic may hinder some of these steps, which will be addressed and reported accordingly to Council in the 2020/21 AGS.

Signed

Chief Executive

Leader of the Council