

Flintshire County Council Code of Corporate Governance



2024 - 2025

Cymraeg

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
Gweler y dudalen Gymraeg ar ein gwefan.
This document is also available in Welsh.
See Welsh page on our website.

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Whilst the Council is the Administering Authority for the Clwyd Pension Fund (the Pension Fund), the Clwyd Pension Fund produce their own Annual Governance Statement.

1. Introduction and Purpose

In accordance with the *Delivering Good Governance Framework* there is an expectation that there is a formally set local structure of governance, often referred to as the Local Code, within each local authority although in practice it may consist of a number of documents. Each authority should be able to demonstrate that the governance structure in place complies with the principles and sub principles contained within the *Delivering Good Governance Framework*.

“Governance is at the heart of public services. It underpins how resources are managed, how decisions are made, how services are delivered and the impact they have, now and in the future. It also infuses how organisations are led and how they interact with the public. Governance needs to be robust but it must also be proportionate. Well-governed organisations are dynamic and take well-managed risks; they are not stagnant and bureaucratic.”¹

Flintshire County Council acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance. The Council has developed a Local Code (structure) of Corporate Governance that defines the principles that underpin the governance of the organisation. The Local Code of Corporate Governance forms part of the Council Constitution and can be accessed on the Council’s website. A summary of the principles upon which it is based can be found in Section 3 of this document.

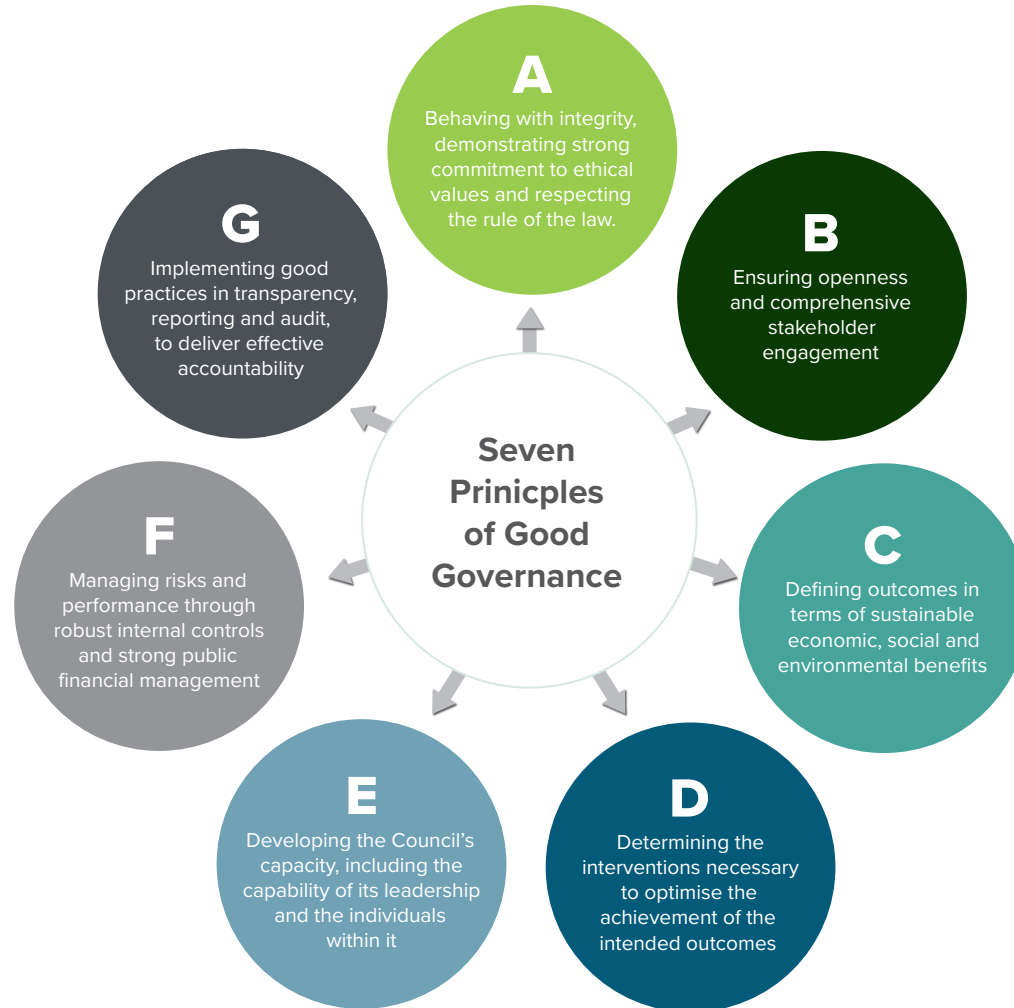
The governance framework comprises the culture, values, systems and processes by which an organisation is directed and controlled. At the heart of our effective corporate governance is our adherence to the seven Nolan principles derived from *Striking the Balance - Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life in Regulation* as listed within the table across and the five ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE	
Selflessness	Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
Integrity	Integrity Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
Objectivity	Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
Accountability	Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
Openness	Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
Honesty	Holders of public office should be truthful.
Leadership	Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour.

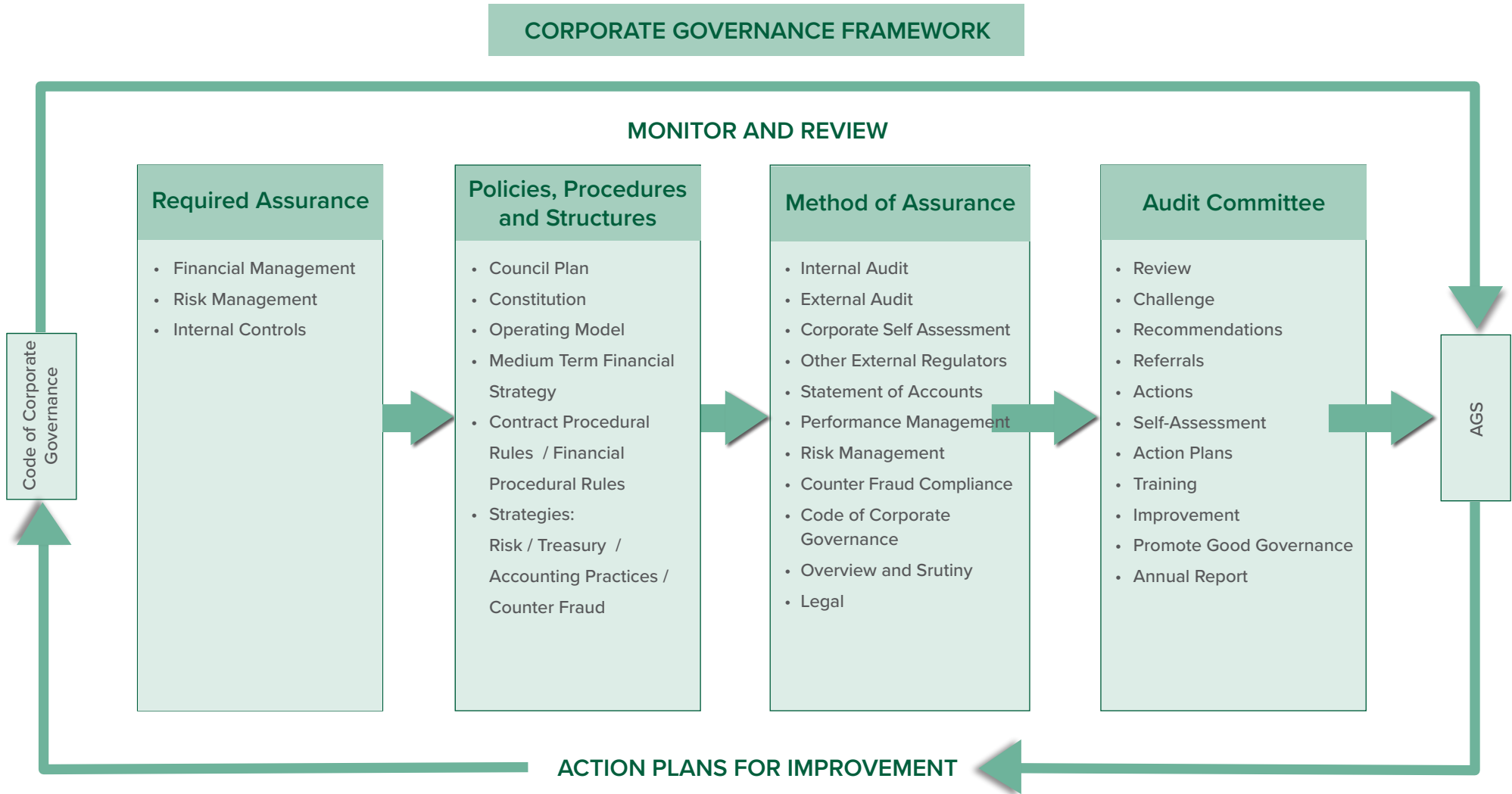
¹Wales Audit Office: “Discussion Paper: The governance challenges posed by indirectly provided, publicly funded services in Wales” 2017

The diagram below is based on the International Framework: *Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) (the 'International Framework')*, and illustrates the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other.

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.



The Council’s Governance Framework brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, good practice principles and management processes (see diagram below)



2. How the Council Achieves Good Governance Overall:

With this section we demonstrate how good governance is achieved and maintained against the Core Principles and Sub Principles of the Delivering Good Governance Framework.

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

BEHAVING WITH INTEGRITY	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>1. Ensuring Members and employees 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Constitution details the Codes of Conduct and Protocols which Members and Officers (employees) have agreed to comply with • The Council requires our Members, whether they are elected or co-opted, to sign and to be bound by our Code • Code of Conduct for Members (1, 2, 3, & 4) • The Flintshire Standard which contains a Local Resolution Procedure for complaints about Member behaviour (1, 2, 3 & 4) • Protocol for Members in their dealings with contractors, developers and other third parties. (1, 3 & 4) • Protocol on Member/ Officer relations (1, 2, 3 & 4) • Employee Code of Conduct (1, 3 & 4) • We operate an effective elections protocol, ensuring high standards are upheld during election periods. (1) • Our list of ‘politically’ restricted posts are reviewed regularly and post holders reminded of statutory restrictions on their political activities. (1, 2, 3, & 4) • We have Dignity at Work policy and Diversity and Equality Policy (1, 2, 3 & 4) • Guidance has been provided to members on conduct of Remote Attendance Meetings (1) • Protocols for Standards Committee and a programme of training for Members (1, 3) • Programme of training provided by WLGA (1, 2) • Approved Organisational Values (2, 4)
<p>2. Ensuring Members take the lead in establishing specific values for the organisation and its employees and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).</p>	
<p>3. Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions.</p>	
<p>4. Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies/processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.</p>	

DEMONSTRATING STRONG COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL VALUES	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>5. Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's commitment to the Nolan principles is shown in the codes and policies below which are found in the Constitution:
<p>6. Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's operation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Code of Conduct for Members</i> (5, 6)
<p>7. Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Flintshire Standard</i> which contains a <i>Local Resolution Procedure for complaints about Member behaviour</i> (5, 6)
<p>8. Ensuring the 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Protocol for Members in their dealings with contractors, developers and other third parties.</i> (5, 6)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Protocol on Member/ Officer relations</i> (5, 6) <i>Employee Code of Conduct</i> (5,6) Contract Procedure Rules (7) Financial Procedure Rules (7) Procurement Strategy (7) Whistleblowing policy (7) Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (8) Developing the Council's values and behaviours through consultation with the workforce (5, 6) Protocols for Standards Committee and a programme of training for Members (5, 6) Programme of training provided by WLGA – proactive additional step to improve standards (5, 6) Approved Organisational Values (5, 6, & 7)

RESPECTING THE RULE OF LAW	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>9. Ensuring Members and employees demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as adhering to the relevant laws and regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Chief Officer (Governance) is the Monitoring Officer and Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) (9, 10, 11, 12, & 13)
<p>10. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Internal Audit function within the Governance Portfolio reports regularly to the Governance and Audit Committee which includes three independent lay Members. (9, 11, 12, & 13)
<p>11. Striving to optimise the use of the Council’s full powers available for the benefit of its citizens, its communities and other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a Standards committee which promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members. It comprises five independent, lay Members, three county councillors and one representative of community and town councils. A review of all committees has been undertaken by the Standards Committee (9, 10, & 11)
<p>12. Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.</p>	
<p>13. Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our relationship with the Wales Audit office and other regulatory bodies (Information Commissioner’s Office and the Equality and Human Rights Commission, plus the four Welsh Commissioners for Welsh Language, Future Generations, Children and Older People) is strong. (9, 11, & 12) • We have a robust Overview & Scrutiny function of five committees which together cover all of the Council’s functions and our external partnerships. (9, 10, & 11) • Unresolved or unsatisfied customer complaints can be considered by Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, whose contact details are published on our website. (9, 10, 12, & 13) • Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and a Fraud Response Plan (12, 13) • Disciplinary Policy (12, 13)

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

OPENNESS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>14. Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's website, intranet and partners networks to continually demonstrate our commitment to openness (14, 15)
<p>15. 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 decisions confidential should be provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most committee reports are considered in public unless there is demonstrable legal basis for confidentiality (15)
<p>16. Provide 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Reports for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Governance and Audit Committee (14, 15) • A calendar of Council meetings is available on the Council's website which includes links to the livestream (14)
<p>17. Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to inform the most appropriate and effective interventions / courses of action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Council meetings are streamed via live webcast. Recordings are subsequently available on our website (15)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Papers published on the Council's website (16) • County Forum (17) • Concerns and Complaints Policy (17) • Surveys including targeted surveys e.g. STAR survey for Contract Holders (17) • Consultation events (17) • Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards (17) • Consultation and Engagement Hub available on Council's website (14, 17) • Social media accounts (14, 17) • Declaration and register of interests' internal system (14) • Social Services, Directors Annual Report (14)

ENGAGING COMPREHENSIVELY WITH INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>18. Effectively engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objective and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Trade Unions (18) • Strategic Partnerships (19) • Public Services Board (Well-being Plan) (19) • Corporate Joint Committees (19) • Economic Ambition Board (19) • Contest Board (19) • Youth Justice Board (19) • Agreed governance of Partnerships (20) • Consultation and Engagement Hub available on Council’s website (18) • Flintshire Joint Trade Union Committee (18) • Education Consultative Committee (18) • Regional Partnership Board (19, 20) • Informal Forums, Networks and Partnerships with the care sector, health, social housing landlords and other Local Authorities (19, 20)
<p>19. Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more effectively and outcomes achieved more effectively.</p>	
<p>20. 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.</p>	

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS EFFECTIVELY, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS AND SERVICE USERS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>21. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Policy (21, 24) • Surveys, Impact and Evidence gathering (22) • Effective methods of Communication (22) • Integrated Impact Assessments (23, 25) • Strategic Reports (26) • Medium Term Financial Strategy (26) • Annual Performance Report (26) • Consultation and Engagement Hub available on Council’s website (23, 24) • Flintshire County Council’s Facebook page provides two-way channel for sharing information and collecting feedback (23) • Council Plan Consultation (26) • Targeted engagement by service area e.g. Planning platform , Tenant Federation (23, 24) • Service user representatives included on panels for tender activities. (23, 24, 25, & 26) • Re-commissioning Carers Services from 2025 with input from carers (23, 24, 25, & 26) • Carers Strategy Group (21, 22) • Young Carers Forum (23, 24 & 25) • Carers Forum (over 18) in development (23, 24 & 25) • Individual carers organisations (23, 24, 25) • Flintshire Carers survey earlier this year that was put out widely and publicly (23, 24, 25 & 26)
<p>22. Ensuring communication methods are effective and that Members and employees are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.</p>	
<p>23. Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.</p>	
<p>24. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.</p>	
<p>25. Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.</p>	
<p>26. Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and services users.</p>	

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

DEFINING OUTCOMES	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
27. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan (27, 28) • Integrated Impact Assessments (28)
28. Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including individual citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan (28) • Medium Term Financial Strategy (29, 31)
29. Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan (29, 31) • Risk Management Framework, Procedure and User Guide (30)
30. Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Strategy (31)
31. Managing expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns and Complaints Policy (31) • Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards (31) • People Strategy (31) • HR Business Continuity Plan (31) • Climate Change Strategy (29, 31) • Procurement Strategy (29, 31)

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
32. Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Reports (32, 33 & 34)
33. Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the Council's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Setting Policy (32, 33) • Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan (32, 33) • Integrated Impact Assessments (32, 34 & 35)
34. 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 optimal solutions for stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan (34) • Service standards including equality monitoring of some services (35)
35. Ensuring fair access to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns and Complaints policy (35)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Strategy, which includes digital inclusion (35) • Consultation and Engagement Hub available on Council's website (34, 35) • Commitment to participate in the National Resident Survey (34, 35) • Specific strategic plans e.g. Local Development Plan (32, 33)

Principle D: Determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievements of the intended outcomes

DETERMINING INTERVENTIONS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>36. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee System (36) • Committee Meetings, workshops & briefings (36) • Committee Minutes (36)
<p>37. 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 within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Reports with supporting information and data (37) • Updated Guidance Notes for the completion of Committee Reports (37) • Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's) (36, 37)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and Engagement Hub available on Council's website (36, 37) • Consideration of Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (36)

PLANNING INTERVENTIONS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
38. Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Schedule of Meetings approved by the annual meeting of Council (38, 39)
39. Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other interventions can best be delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet receives the combined forward work programme monthly (38, 39)
40. Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of the five Overview & Scrutiny Committees reviews its own Forward work programme at each meeting (38, 39)
41. Ensuring arrangements are flexible/agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan Performance Monitoring (38, 42)
42. Establishing appropriate local performance indicators (as well as statutory or other national performance indicators) as part of the planning process in order to assess how the performance of services is to be measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Framework and User Guide (40)
43. Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan, and Corporate Performance Monitoring (41, 43)
44. Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Financial Term Strategy and budget planning process (44, 45)
45. Informing medium and long-term resources planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.	

OPTIMISING ACHIEVEMENT OF INTENDED OUTCOMES	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>46. Ensuring the Medium-Term Financial Strategy integrates and balances off service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy (46, 47) • Annual Budget Setting process (46, 47) • Procurement Strategy (49) • Contract Procedure Rules (49) • Financial Procedure Rule (49) • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year business plan (49) • Social Value Strategy (49) • Social Value Procurement Policy (49)
<p>47. Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.</p>	
<p>48. 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.</p>	
<p>49. Ensuring the achievement of ‘social value’ or ‘community benefits’ 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”</p>	

Principle E: Developing the Council’s capacity, including the capability of its leaderships and the individuals within it

DEVELOPING THE ENTITY’S CAPACITY	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
50. Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Performance Report (50, 51) • Corporate Self-Assessment (50)
51. Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the Council’s resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan Performance Monitoring (50, 51) • Agreed Council’s Capital Strategy & Asset Management Plan (50, 51)
52. Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Council’s People and Customer Care Policy Statement & Standards (50)
53. Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance strategic allocation of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APSE Benchmarking (where applicable) (51) • Audit Wales Audit Summary (51, 52) • Strategic and/or regional partnerships/forums - for example, Public Services Board (52) • Endorsed and approved People Strategy and associated action plan (53) • Transition plan management, workforce planning assessments (including succession plans) and service resilience and efficiency statements (53) • Housemark benchmarking (annual) (51) • Socitm benchmarking (51) • Transformation programme (50, 53)

DEVELOPING THE CAPABILITY OF THE ENTITY’S LEADERSHIP AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
54. Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Constitution and Scheme of Delegation are under regular review and set out the arrangements for our governance (54, 55, 56 & 57)
55. Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions delegated to the Cabinet and those reserved for the collective decision making of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined job description for the Chief Executive which sets out the statutory, strategic, and management and leadership roles (56)
56. Ensuring the Leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Chief Executive leads the Council 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externally facilitated appraisal for Chief Executive on annual basis provides for a shared understanding and clarity on forward priorities between the Leader and the Chief Executive (56) • Ability to respond to change demands through flexibilities within the Senior Management structure (57)
57. Developing the capabilities of Members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the Council to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual corporate and services specific induction and support for all employees in new jobs. Bespoke induction and support for elected Members (58)
58. Ensuring employees have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role with ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After whole council elections, there is a comprehensive induction programme for new and returning Members (57)
59. Ensuring Members and employees have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to continuously update their knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance appraisals, are one of a number of performance management tools used, including 1-2-1 meetings, day to day supervision and team meetings, that aim to ensure employees’ performance contributes to business objectives, and is used as part of a holistic approach to managing performance (58, 63)
60. Ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from both internal and external governance weaknesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and skills are built and maintained through regular briefings and workshops (59, 60)
61. Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of e-learning modules are available to employees and members to enhance (or refresh) their knowledge of specific areas (59)
62. Taking steps to consider the leadership’s own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans following external regulator inspection (60)
63. Holding employees to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training and development needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External regulatory protocol in place (60)
64. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of public consultation methods, a concerns and complaints policy and statutory protocols for public engagement in Overview and Scrutiny (61)

DEVELOPING THE CAPABILITY OF THE ENTITY'S LEADERSHIP AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS

HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:

- Welcome peer reviews of both governance arrangements and service delivery to improve the effectiveness of leadership (62)
- Career structures are in place for all employees and encourage participation in development and training (62, 63)
- Provision of learning and development opportunities for all employees, details of available courses accessible on the Infonet and bookable via iTrent (63)
- An increase in the use of e-learning to support employees working in a hybrid manner (63)
- A range of Council policies and procedures including, Health and Wellbeing, Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Workplace Policies are available on the Infonet (64)
- Provision of and promotion of our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides emotional and practical support for issues at home or in work and supplements the support available from Occupational Health (64)
- Dedicated Health and Wellbeing section on the Infonet which provides access to support on an individual, management and team level, including the useful numbers and links to external support networks e.g. MIND, Samaritans (64)
- Provision of Health Surveillance for those employees who may be exposed to noise, vibration and substances hazardous to health (64)
- Consultation and Engagement Hub available on Council's website (61)

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

MANAGING RISK	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
65. Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Framework, Procedural documents, User Guide and E Learning module (65, 66, & 67) • Performance management system to record details of Risk Registers (65, 66 & 67) • Development of Business Plans (65)
66. Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.	
67. Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.	
MANAGING PERFORMANCE	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
68. Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Planning (68) • Risk Management (68) • Performance Monitoring (68) • Integrated Impact Assessments. (69) • Financial Procedural Rules. (69) • Contract Procedural Rules. (69) • Five Overview and Scrutiny Committees (70) • Call in Process (70) • Cabinet (70, 71) • Council's Constitution (70) • Council Policies (70)
69. 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.	
70. 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 Council's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.	
71. Providing Members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.	
72. Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).	

MANAGING PERFORMANCE

HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:

- Council Plan Performance Monitoring (71)
- Corporate Self-Assessment (71)
- Publicly published Agenda and minutes (71)
- Publicly reported Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report (71)
- Publicly reported Internal Audit Annual Report (71)
- Publicly reported Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report (71)
- Budget Monitoring Process (72)
- Budget Monitoring Reports (72)
- Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny (72)
- Programme Boards (71, 72)
- Programme Co-ordinating Groups (71, 72)
- Governance and Audit Committee (70, 72)
- Annual Pay Policy Statement (71)

ROBUST INTERNAL CONTROL	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
73. Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the Council's objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Framework and User Guide (73, 74)
74. Evaluating and monitoring the Council's risk management and internal control on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Business Plans (73) • Internal Audit Reviews (74)
75. Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and Audit Committees endorsement of strategy and biannual performance reports (74, 76)
76. Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (75)
77. Ensuring an Governance and Audit Committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the Cabinet provides a further source of effective assurance arrangements for managing risk and maintain an effective control environment and that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraud Response Plan (75) • Whistleblowing Policy (75) • Internal Audit and Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standard (PSIAS) (76)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Annual Internal Audit Risk Based Plan (74, 76) • Governance and Audit Committee comprising of six Members and three lay Members. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee are lay Members (77) • Governance and Audit Committee Charter and Terms of Reference (77) • Governance and Audit Committee's Annual Report (77) • Governance and Audit Committee's compliance with the CIPFA guide for Governance and Audit Committee's (77) • Financial Procedure Rules (74, 76) • Contract Procedure Rules (74, 76)

MANAGING DATA	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
78. Ensuring effective and legally compliant arrangements are in place for the safe collection storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to ensure the security of personal data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and Data Management Strategy. (78, 79 & 80) • A Data Protection Officer to advise on our obligations, liaise with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO), and who reports directly to Chief Officer Governance. (78, 79 & 80) • An Information Governance team to monitor compliance (78, 79 & 80) • A GDPR Project Board to provide focus and senior management oversight (78, 79 & 80) • An Information Compliance Operational Group (ICOG) consisting of Data Protection link officers from across the Authority to monitor performance and ensure consistency between Portfolios. (78, 79 & 80) • Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) (78, 79) • Information Security Management System (78, 79) • Data Protection Policies, Guidance and Training (78,79) • Cyber Security Training (78) • Public Services Network certification (78, 79) • Wales Accord for Sharing Personal Information (WASPI) (79) • GDPR Phase 2 Action Plan (78, 79 & 80) • Corporate Information Asset Register (78, 80) • Data Processing Agreements (78) • Data Sharing Agreements (79) • Corporate reporting and monitoring of security breaches (78, 79 & 80) • Data Protection Audit (80) • IT Compliance Assessment (78, 79 & 80) • Annual IT Health Check (ITHC) (78) • Central recording of corporate performance data (InPhase) (80) • External data quality audits (80) • Internal audit of data to support decision making (80) • Corporate and Service specific document and data Retention Schedules (78, 79 & 80)
79. Ensuring effective and legally compliments arrangements are in place when sharing data with other bodies.	
80. Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.	

STRONG PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
<p>81. Ensuring the Council's financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS.) (81) • Business Efficiency Plans (82) • Part 4 of the Constitution - Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules (82) • Monthly revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (82) • Quarterly capital monitoring reports to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (82) • Treasury Management and Policy Statement (82) • Scheme of Delegation (82) • Financial Procedural Rules (82) • Contract Procedural Rules (82) • Council's Constitution (82)
<p>82. Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all organisational levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.</p>	

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

IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICE IN TRANSPARENCY	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
83. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Website (83, 84) • Council's publication scheme (83, 84) • Annual Performance Report (83, 84) • Council's Corporate Self-Assessment (83, 84) • Updated Report Format and Writing Guidance (83, 84) • Easy read and use of infographics of strategies and public documents (83, 84) • Annual Pay Policy Statement (83, 84) • Annual Audit Opinion (83, 84) • Annual Governance Statement (83, 84)
84. Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny whilst not being too onerous for the Council to provide and for users to understand.	
IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES IN REPORTING	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
85. Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Performance Report (85) • Council Plan Performance Monitoring (85, 87) • Audited and Signed Statement of Accounts (85, 86, 89) • Corporate Self-Assessment (86, 87) • Code of Corporate Governance (87, 88) • Annual Governance Statement (87, 88) • Mid-Year Update on the Annual Governance Statement (87) • Annual Internal Audit Report (87, 88) • Annual Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report (87, 88)
86. Ensuring Members and senior management own the results.	
87. Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this 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).	
88. Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.	
89. 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.	

ASSURANCE AND EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY	HOW THE COUNCIL ACHIEVES THIS:
90. Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee reports and action tracking (90)
91. Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to Members is in place which provides assurance with regard to the Council’s governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Regulation Reporting and Monitoring Protocol (90)
92. Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action tracking and reporting (90)
93. Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent position of Internal Audit within the Council with direct access to Senior Officers and Members (91)
94. Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly meetings with the Leader of the Council (91)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Self-Assessment and external assessment for compliance with the Internal Audit Public Sector Standards (PSIAS) (91) • Regular Self-Assessment of Services (92) • External validation via benchmarking (when available) and commissioned assessments (92) • External Regulatory Reports (Committee Minutes) (92) • Annual Summary of External Regulatory reports to Governance and Audit Committee (92) • Peer Reviews (92) • Partnership governance arrangements (94)

3. Monitoring and Review

The Code of Corporate Governance forms part of the Constitution. It is reviewed and updated annually by the Corporate Governance Group to ensure it is up to date and complies with all relevant legislation and other requirements. The Code of Corporate Governance is used to update the Annual Governance Statement.

The membership of the Corporate Governance Group is:

Lisa Brownbill (Chair)	Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager
Emma Heath	Strategic Performance Advisor
Rachel Corbelli	Principal Accountant
Richard Ashley	ICT Services Business Manager
Sharon Carney	Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development
Stephen Goodrum	Democratic Services Manager
Rebecca Jones	Customer Contact Service Manager
Kelly Oldham-Jones	Strategic Executive Officer
Sam Perry	Performance and Risk Officer

4. Assurance Statements

I am satisfied that there are effective governance arrangements in place, including a sound system of internal control, throughout the year ended 31st March and that this is ongoing.

Signed	Position	Date
	Chief Executive	27/01/2025
	Section 151 Officer	28/01/2025
	Chief Officer - Governance	27/01/2025