

REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE – 5 JULY 2018

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the revised Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix 2 incorporating feedback received from both the Committee and External Audit;
- 1.2 Adopt the revised Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix 2; and
- 1.3 Note that the self-evaluation report will be reviewed on an annual basis.

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 At its meeting on 24 May 2018, the Committee considered a revised Code of Corporate Governance. It was subsequently agreed that further work would be undertaken on the Code and a final version would be reported back to Committee following a briefing session with Members.
 - 2.2 A briefing session with Members of the Committee took place on 25 June 2018. The session consisted of a short presentation followed by group work at which Members were given the opportunity to consider the evidence presented in the self-evaluation and discuss at length. A number of additional actions were identified as a result and have been included in the revised Code, together with supporting evidence where required. In addition a number of suggestions were made that cannot be incorporated into the current version of the Code due to timescales but will be considered in the next review, including improvements to formatting and wording of the report itself to ensure clarity.
 - 2.3 Officers have also had the opportunity to engage with External Audit for their input. Following those discussions, further detail has been added to the self-evaluation, in particular with regard to the supporting evidence.
 - 2.4 The changes made to the Code since it was last reported to the Audit Committee are summarised in the Table of Changes at Appendix 1. The final version of the Code, incorporating all feedback received, forms Appendix 2.
 - 2.4 At the core of the Code are the following six principles:
 - (i) Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
 - (ii) Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
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- (iii) Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
 - (iv) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
 - (v) Developing the capacity and capabilities of members and officers to be effective.
 - (vi) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.
- 2.6 The Code builds on internal governance work, revised guidance from CIPFA/SOLACE and benchmarking with other authorities. It has been compared against the principles set out in the revised *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* publication (2016).
- 2.7 The self-evaluation report has been undertaken for the first time and is incorporated within the document, giving context to the principles and themes set out in the Code itself. It splits the core principles into themes against which the Council's compliance can be evidenced. This allows for a robust self-assessment and evaluation to be carried out by linking the governance arrangements to the performance and outcomes of the Council. The self-evaluation forms part of the assurance process for the Annual Governance Statement, which is revised annually upon the completion of the audit of the Council's accounts. It is recognised that the self-evaluation will be further developed over the coming years as processes and procedures are implemented to collate the evidence required.
- 2.7 Both Members of the Audit Committee and the Council's External Auditor have provided feedback on the self-evaluation on this occasion. It is intended that a similar process will be established for the next review with Elected Member involvement through an officer-member working group. The process will be commenced in time to allow for thorough discussion and engagement on the available evidence and the Council's compliance with the core principles. A report will be submitted to the Audit Committee later in the year with further detail on the timeline and process for review.
- 2.7 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report and have no comments to make.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section G.1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the review of policies and practices employed to ensure compliance with relevant statutes, directions, guidance and policies. Whilst the previous versions of the Code were approved by Full Council, the changes introduced by the new Scheme of Governance in January 2017 mean that approval of the Code now falls within the remit of the Audit Committee.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because the report seeks the adoption of the revised Code of Corporate Governance and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 4.2 There are no staffing and financial implications associated with this report. The annual review of the self-evaluation can be met within existing staffing resources.
- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:
ACORP009 – Operational Risk Management – if the Code is not updated in accordance with the new CIPFA/SOLACE guidance it may not be fit for purpose and may not offer the robust assessment required to give the necessary assurance that the Council is complying with the core principles.

Ritchie Johnson, Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Ruth O'Hare, Principal Solicitor (Democratic Services)

Date: 26 June 2018

APPENDIX 1 – TABLE OF CHANGES

Principle 1 (Code of Corporate Governance):
Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
Themes:
Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users
<p>Reference has been made to the staff surveys evidencing staff awareness of the vision. Further, a link has been added to the Council Plan 2017-2022.</p> <p>Further detail has been added on the scrutiny of Service Plans by Committee Members.</p> <p>A link has been inserted to the Public Performance Report and further detail added around the performance reporting calendar.</p> <p>Clarification has been added to confirm that the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils will be subject to a light touch review by Full Council.</p> <p>Additional information has been added regarding the Council's promotional activity and an action has been included to consider how best to communicate and promote the vision to the community.</p>
Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning
<p>A link has been added to the Public Performance Report.</p> <p>Further detail has been added to explain how performance information is logged by officers and assessed. In addition reference has been made to upcoming workshops.</p> <p>Reference has been made to the annual report on participation requests which will be published at the end of June 2018. Details won't therefore be available in time for this years self-evaluation.</p> <p>Further information has been added regarding corporate and service satisfaction measures and how these are collated, published and actioned.</p> <p>Links have been added to the Annual Complaints Performance report.</p> <p>Details of the scrutiny processes undertaken to date have been added and an action for member training on the process has been added.</p>
Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.
<p>A link to the Council's Public Performance Report has been added to evidence the Council's commitment to best value.</p> <p>Reference has been made to the projects ongoing regarding grants and loans procedures and the procurement approval process. Further detail has been added to clarify the current procurement approval process and how this is operating in practice.</p>

Principle 2:

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

Themes:

Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function *
In our council we have a committee structure and this is where decisions are made, not by individual members

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Further information on future training for elected Members has been included. Specific reference has been made to Standards Commission guidance on strategic vs operational roles which will be used as a basis for future training.

Details have been included on the provision of guidance to members through monitoring officers and bespoke training that can be arranged if required. An action has been added to consider that a CPD Programme Report to be brought to Audit Committee before end 2018.

Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Reference has been made to the face to face and ALDO training on the Scheme of Governance and the ongoing Procurement and Grants Projects have been added as an action.

Detail has been added to confirm that all committee reports must be approved by the Monitoring Officer.

Further detail has been added regarding the Future Governance Working Group which shaped the Scheme of Governance along with the strategic leadership team.

Further information has been added regarding the Council's Confident Governance programme.

Ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified. A link to the Council's Public Performance Report has been added.

Further detail on the Council Plan and supporting delivery plans has been added together with details on performance monitoring.

Further information on partnerships and in particular an example of self-assessment in relation to the Community Planning Partnership has been included.

An action to progress implementation of the Job Evaluation Scheme has been included.

Principle 3:

Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

Themes:

Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Further detail has been added regarding Notices of Motion and Member Promoted Issues to reflect the opportunities available for Members to raise issues in an open and transparent manner. Details on the number of MPs for 2017/2018 has been added together with reference to guidance on Notices of Motion which will be included in the Scheme as an action.

Specific details on training for Members undertaken in 2017 has been added and reference has been made to training on the Social Media Policy. In addition reference has been included to developing additional training on the Code of Conduct with input from the Standards Commission as appropriate and an action has been added to reflect this.

The hospitality and gift policy has been included together with the register of interests which is regularly updated.

Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Specific reference has been made to One Aberdeenshire and the engagement exercise undertaken across the Council which led to the development of key principles and behaviours.

Reference has been made to the Policy and Development Review Framework and the register of Council policies which is in the process of being developed.

Further detail has been added on complaints statistics for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 and a link to the Annual Complaints Performance Report has been added. In addition an action has been added to make it clear that all SPSO decisions will be reported to the Audit Committee going forward.

Further information on the Council's Leadership Forum has been added together with information on Employee Annual Reviews.

Principle 4

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Themes:

Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

An additional action has been added regarding work ongoing to enhance the role of the Audit Committee.

Detail has been added regarding licensing appeals and planning appeals in 2017/2018.

A link has been added to the Annual Complaints Performance Report.

Some further detail has been added on the use of emergency powers in 2017/2018.

Information has been included regarding Freedom of Information requests and statistics on the numbers dealt with timeously in 2017.

Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Reference has been added to the assurance provided by the Monitoring Officer in the corporate report template.

Detail has been included regarding meetings between solicitors and services to identify legal issues at an earlier stage. An action has been added to ensure meetings are recorded consistently.

Information has been included to clarify solicitors attend all committee meetings to give assurance that decisions are legally compliant.

Reference has been made to the guidance note available for report authors.

Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Information has been added regarding the whistleblowing policy and action to assess reports going forward.

An action has been added to ensure that Risk Registers will be reported to the Audit Committee on a regular basis.

Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Additional information has been added regarding appeals against licensing and planning decisions.

Further detail has been added on ALDO training on officer's powers.

Principle 5:

Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

Themes:

Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles

Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

Further information has been added on the role of the L&D Team in providing training across the Council. Reference has been made to a Senior Manager programme currently in development.

There is clarification on Employee Annual Reviews and the plans to move to a new Personal Performance Plan for all non-teaching employees in 2018/2019.

Further information has been added on ALDO online training and also service-led training programmes that can be tailored to particular needs.

Actions have been added regarding the introduction of the Personal Performance Plan and the roll out of the Service Manager programme.

Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.

The scoring has been changed from Very Good to Good in order to reflect the improvement actions identified.

This section has been revised to enhance content and in particular set out the processes in place for encouraging individuals to join the Council. References to recruitment methods including job fairs, staff incentives and apprenticeship programmes have been included. Further detail has been included on candidate days prior to the May 2017 elections as well as a link provided to the Council's Guide on the Role and Duties of an Aberdeenshire Councillor.

Information has been included regarding staff structures within the Council and discussions on career progression and enhancement.

Principle 6:

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Themes:

Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships

No changes have been made to this section

Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning

No changes have been made to this section.

Aberdeenshire Council Code of Corporate Governance

1. Introduction and Background

Aberdeenshire Council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance based on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) publication *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. This builds on *The Good Governance for Public Services* issued by the Independent Commission of Good Governance in Public Services.

In the context of Local Government, CIPFA proposes this definition of corporate governance:

“Corporate governance is the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities.”

2. The Fundamental Principles of Corporate Governance

Aberdeenshire Council abide by the seven general principles of conduct as underpinned in the 1994 Nolan Committee report of Standards in Public Life.:

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- Managing risk and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

The (then) Scottish Executive also identified nine key principles underpinning public life in Scotland, which incorporate the seven Nolan principles and introduce two further principles:

- **Public Service** – the duty to act in the interests of the local authority to act in accordance with the core tasks of the local authority.
- **Respect** – for fellow members and employees of the local authority and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times.

Aberdeenshire Council abide by the six core principles taken from The Good Governance Standard for Public Services developed by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services in 2004 with support from the Office for Public Management (OPM) and CIPFA which are:

- (i) Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.**
- (ii) Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.**
- (iii) Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.**
- (iv) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.**
- (v) Developing the capacity and capabilities of members and officers to be effective.**
- (vi) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.**

The six core principles developed by the Independent Commission on Good Governance on Public Services were adapted for local government purpose in the CIPFA/SOLACE document *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*, and they interpret principles of good governance into a local authority context.

3. How Aberdeenshire ensures, and is seen to ensure, proper governance of its affairs

The Council Publishes an Annual Governance Statement [link to be inserted] which is revised annually upon the completion of the audit of the Council's accounts.

In addition, the Council produces a summary self-evaluation report on an annual basis. 'How Good Is Our Council?' has been adopted as the Council's approach to self-assessment and evaluation and promoting performance improvement. It provides us with a framework with which the Council is able to evidence outcomes and impact, identifying strengths and opportunities for development, which in turn enables learning and improvement to take place.

The self-evaluation also supports the Council to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance by evidencing application of the six core principles, outlined above.

Code of Corporate Governance Self-Assessment

Principle 1 (Code of Corporate Governance):			
Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area			
Themes:			
Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users			
Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning			
Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.			
What do we currently do?	How good are we?	How do we know?	What do we want to do now?
...taking stock	...evaluation	...evidence	...improvement planning
<p>Theme 1 Develop and Promote the council's purpose and vision</p> <p>Review on a regular basis the local authority's vision for local area and implications for governance</p> <p>Ensure that Partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners</p> <p>Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's</p>	GOOD	<p>The council has had a vision for several years that is well understood and visible across a range of platforms accessed by both residents and staff regularly. Previous staff surveys have indicated that staff are aware of the council's vision and how it impacts their role.</p> <p>In 2014 a vision for Aberdeenshire to 2050 was developed that further articulates the council and partnership visions.</p> <p>The Council Plan 2017-2022 was approved by Full Council in November 2017. This was developed through extensive engagement, political direction and a comprehensive strategic assessment.</p>	<p>Continue to Implement Community Empowerment Act (led by PP&I)</p> <p>Investigate how other councils do their corporate governance assessment</p> <p>Ensure Statement of Accounts refers to new Scheme of Governance</p> <p>Review Partnership Policy (led by PP&I) by October 2018</p>

<p>activities and achievements, its financial position and performance</p>	<p>The Council regularly promotes its work through social media channels. With regard to the Council Plan, a short video was developed and promoted which condensed the essential information into digestible content for members of the public.</p> <p>The Community Planning Partnership Board agreed the Aberdeenshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2021 in September 2017. The three priorities within the LOIP were developed through the partnership and focus on the issues that impact significantly on all partners and communities that can only be improved through partnership working and community participation.</p> <p>Each service currently has a Service Plan that shows how the service will deliver on the priority projects confirmed by full council in 2015. These will be superseded by Priority Delivery Plans supporting the Council Plan 2017-2022 in May 2018. These plans will continue to be scrutinised regularly by Policy Committees. Where performance is not as expected (based on targets or timelines), improvement action is identified and Members can also suggest improvement activity or further scrutiny to understand the issues using Part 4 of the Scheme of Governance.</p> <p>A corporate Communication Strategy is in place which was endorsed by all area committees and approved by Policy & Resources Committee in 2016.</p> <p>Each area has a Local community plans 2016-2019 which was developed through partnership and community engagement and seeks to deliver on the overarching CPP vision. These plans are regularly reviewed by the Local Community Planning Groups and by Area Committees.</p> <p>The role of Community Councils as local statutory representation is recognised and a refreshed Scheme of Establishment has been put place from 1 April 2018.</p>	<p>Consider how the Council can best communicate and promote its vision for Aberdeenshire.</p>
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		<p>The implementation of the Scheme will be subject to a light touch review by Full Council in April 2019.</p> <p>There is a Partnership & Joint Working policy however it is not as embedded as it should be and under review. A recent Internal Audit confirmed the need to review and embed the policy</p> <p>The Annual Statement of Accounts includes the Annual Governance Statement and highlights improvement actions</p> <p>A Public Performance Report is published annually which highlights what has been achieved and where improvement activity is necessary as a result of targets being missed, etc. This is supplemented by a range of regular performance reporting by services. A performance reporting calendar confirms what and when performance is reported. Every September Full Council consider a range of performance information (annual report, annual audit report, etc) to help members judge whether the council is meeting the Council Plans and if further/revised delivery actions are necessary which would be proposed by the relevant policy committee chair.</p>	
<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review quality is effectively and regularly available</p> <p>Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with service delivery</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>A Public Performance Report is published annually on the Council's public website and supplemented by a range of regular performance reporting by services. A performance reporting calendar confirmed what and when performance is reported. Every September Full Council considers a range of performance information (annual report, annual audit report, etc) to help members judge whether the council is meeting the Council Plan. Policy and Area Committees considered a range of performance information regularly. It has been recognised that elected Members require information that is meaningful and allows for service delivery to be reviewed effectively. Workshops will be carried out with</p>	<p>Scheme of Governance under review - due to be completed September 2018</p> <p>Training for elected Members on the scrutiny process</p> <p>Workshops with elected Members to agree format of performance information</p>

		<p>Members in 2018/2019 to discuss and agree the format of performance information.</p> <p>Key performance indicators used by services have targets set. The council has a corporate performance management system (Pentana) which is fully accessible to all officers and partners and Members. Many services have service standards in place which help users understand what they should expect from the council. Services use a range of means to discuss performance information, including management teams, team meetings and 121s and actions will be agreed where necessary.</p> <p>A Participation Request Process is in place which allows community bodies to request active involvement in an improvement process. The Council is now required to prepare an annual report on participation requests. The first report will be published at the end of June 2018 and will be available on the Council website.</p> <p>Every month an independent research company contacts residents to seek views on a range of corporate and service satisfaction measures. Comments made by residents are shared with services for review and actioned as appropriate. We publish the monthly results on the website as well and an annual report (which has the highest level of confidence) is considered by SLT and DMTs to determine any potential improvement activity.</p> <p>An Annual Complaints performance report is published. The feedback team also provide feedback to services on complaints to support process improvement. Examples of how feedback is used to improve service delivery is included in the Public Performance Report.</p> <p>Services use external scrutiny bodies to confirm the quality of service delivery in areas such as social care, education and community learning and housing. Action plans are developed to support improvement activity.</p>	
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		<p>Corporately the Local Scrutiny Plan, Annual Audit Report and national performance audits are considered by Elected Members and Chief Officers. Officer reports are presented to committee to support discussion and highlight any action necessary.</p> <p>The council uses a self-assessment and evaluation framework 'How Good Is Our Council?' The evaluation report is considered by SLT and then published on the website. There is a corporate assessment annually.</p> <p>Part 4 of the Scheme of Governance confirms a scrutiny process for policy and area committees. In 2017/2018 one stage 1 scrutiny exercise was undertaken by the Education and Children's Services Committee and one is currently pending for 2018/2019. However Committees have continued to undertake scrutiny of Council services out with the formal scrutiny process. In respect of the stage 1 scrutiny exercise undertaken the Committee received sufficient reassurance from the stage 1 report. An outcome of a scrutiny exercise can be the review of a policy to ensure it is directing service delivery appropriately although this has not arisen in the first year of the process. This approach allows Elected Members to influence/ determine change through Policy Development & Review framework, also Part 4 of the Scheme of Governance. It is intended that training on the scrutiny process will be undertaken with elected Members in 2018/2019 to increase awareness.</p>	
<p>Theme 3 Value for Money is measured</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>The Scheme of Governance provides a framework for officers to seek Best Value when procuring goods/services and spending money through the financial regulations (Part 3) and procurement guidance. There has been officer guidance however general financial training is not routinely provided to officers albeit there has been a programme of training delivered to officers and members alike on the new procurement procedures.</p>	<p>Financial Regulations under review as part of Scheme of Governance Review</p> <p>Procurement Approval Process and Grants and Loans Procedures under Review in 2018/2019.</p>

		<p>Residents are asked if there are satisfied that the council provides value for money and routinely over 90% of residents agree. The Council's Public Performance Report sets out how it seeks achieving best value against indicators that align with the 2003 Best Value legislation.</p> <p>The Council has adopted the Following the Public Pound code of practice – agreed at Policy & Resource Committee. The Council is currently reviewing its grants and loans procedures through a cross-service project led by officers within Legal and Governance.</p> <p>The procurement approval process was implemented through the new Scheme of Governance in January 2017 and gives elected Members the ability to scrutinise spend prior to any tender process and provide input on service delivery. Any proposed spend over £50k is included on a work plan considered by the relevant committee and the committee can agree to reserve the approval of a business case where it considers further scrutiny is required. The committee will automatically have proactive involvement in any proposed spend of £1million or more. Any proposed spend over £10k is subject to a business case and Chief Officer approval. Service Champions across the Council have provided feedback on the procurement approval process in 2017/2018 and a project looking at improvements will take place in 2018/2019.</p>	
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Principle 2:			
Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles			
Themes:			
Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function * <i>In our council we have a committee structure and this is where decisions are made, not by individual members</i>			
Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard			
Ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.			
What do we currently do?	How good are we?	How do we know?	What do we want to do now?
...taking stock	...evaluation	...evidence	...improvement planning
Theme 1 Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of members generally and of senior officers	GOOD	<p>The Scheme of Governance Part 2A and Part 2B clearly states what Members do and what Officers do. In early 2018 the Standards Commission issued an Advice Note for Councillors on distinguishing between strategic and operational roles which will form the basis of training for Members in 2018/2019.</p> <p>There is a Councillors Code of Conduct and training on Code is delivered to Members – positive feedback received. Throughout 2017/2018 several gaps in development have been identified and tailored sessions will be developed in 2018/2019 to address these.</p> <p>The Council provides guidance to members through it's monitoring officers and training can be provided on a bespoke one to one basis if required.</p>	<p>Deliver CPD programme for Members over next year</p> <p>Consider bringing CPD Programme Report before Audit Committee before end of 2018</p>

<p>Theme 2</p> <p>Ensure there is a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule on those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required.</p> <p>The Chief Executive is responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management</p> <p>Protocols exist to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained</p> <p>A senior officer (s.95) is responsible to the authority for ensuring appropriate advice is given on all financial matters for keeping proper financial records and accounts and for maintaining effective systems of internal financial control</p> <p>A senior Officer (Monitoring Officer) is responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable</p>		<p>There are clear job descriptions for all senior officers including the Chief Executive</p>	
<p>A refreshed Scheme of Governance was implemented in January 2017 which explicitly states the delegations, powers of both Officers and Committees. This is accessible online and extensive training was undertaken with officers and members face to face as well as with a specifically developed ALDO course (online).</p> <p>There is dedicated governance team in Legal & Governance providing advice and support.</p> <p>Every services has a number of Governance Champions who meet with the Legal Governance team regularly to develop their understanding share experience.</p> <p>All committee reports must evidence which Part of Scheme of Governance enables decision and be approved by a Monitoring Officer</p> <p>The Chief Executive now has specifically defined delegations within section C of Part 2B of Scheme of Governance</p> <p>The Chief Executive has a defined job profile</p> <p>There is a Chief Officer Appraisal scheme and all COs have an annual appraisal.</p> <p>There are positive and professional relations between senior elected leaders and senior officers. Regular meetings take place between the Chief Executive and the Leadership.</p> <p>There are clear definitions supporting the scheme of governance confirming the roles of members and officers and who is responsible for what – there is training material available for members and officers.</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>Scheme of Governance Review to be completed September 2018</p> <p>Procurement and Grants Project to be continued and overseen by the Procedures Committee.</p> <p>Complete review of Partnership & Joint Working Policy by October 2018</p>	

<p>statutes and regulations are complied with</p>		<p>The Future Governance Working Group was an elected member group who were instrumental in shaping the scheme of governance along with the strategic leadership team.</p> <p>The Section 95 Officer has a clearly defined role and responsibilities including preparation of the annual statement of accounts.</p> <p>The Head of Legal & Governance is the designated Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Councillor Ward pages provide a mechanism to communicate with Elected Members. There is both push and pull approaches through ward pages to enable Members to respond to consultations as well as review information bulletins etc.</p> <p>Remuneration information is published on website and through statement of accounts.</p> <p>There is a Partnership & Joint Working Policy however this is not fully embedded and is under review.</p> <p>The Council has a “Confident Governance” programme which provides support and training to all members when they are nominated by the Council to represent the Council on an outside body.</p>	
<p>Theme 3 Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles Ensure that there is an established scheme for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>Salary information is published internally and externally The council complies with the requirement to publish pay information such as the gender pay gap. A Performance management & reporting framework was approved by Policy & Resources Committee September 2016.</p>	<p>Engagement Policy being developed – co-ordinated by Policy Performance and Improvement Team</p>

<p>process including an effective remuneration panel</p> <p>Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery</p> <p>Ensure that the authority's vision, corporate plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, that they are clearly articulated and disseminated</p> <p>When working in partnerships ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities</p> <p>When working in partnership, ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership and ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partnership decisions</p>	<p>A Public Performance Report is published annually supplemented by a range of regular performance reporting by services. A performance reporting calendar confirmed what and when performance is reported. Every September full council consider a range of performance information (annual report, annual audit report, etc) to help members judge whether the council is meeting the Council Plan. Policy and Area Committees considered a range of performance information regularly.</p> <p>The Council Plan 2017-2022 has been approved and supporting delivery plans were approved in April and May 2018. These will be monitored by Policy Committees on a six-monthly basis. Workshops will be arranged with the Policy Committees in 2018 to develop key performance indicators with set targets to reflect the delivery plans and many services have existing service standards in place which help users understand what they should expect from the council.</p> <p>There is Consultation code of practice and database which reflects National Standards for Engagement however an Engagement Policy and updated supporting procedures and guidance are under development to better support officers and inform, engage and involve communities appropriately.</p> <p>There is a Partnership & Joint Working Policy which includes reference to risk management however this is not fully embedded and is under review.</p> <p>Statutory or mandated partnerships such as Community Planning Partnership, Community Justice Partnership, Getting it Right For Every Child have clear terms of reference and accountability structures. These partnerships undertake self-assessment to check how the partnership is doing. For example the CPP undertook work with What Works Scotland to understand how effective it was as a partnership and this informed and shaped the review of the CPP</p>	<p>Review and implement Partnership & Joint Working Policy (led by PP&I) by October 2018</p> <p>Progress implementation of Job Evaluation Scheme</p>
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			structure supporting delivery of Part 2 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Partnerships all generally have action plans and strategies with regular performance monitoring to the Boards and public performance reporting.	
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Principle 3:			
Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour			
Themes:			
Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance			
Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.			
What do we currently do?	How good are we?	How do we know?	What do we want to do now?
<p>...taking stock</p> <p>Theme 1 Ensure that the Council's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect</p> <p>Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest</p>	<p>...evaluation</p> <p>GOOD</p>	<p>...evidence</p> <p>Our Scheme of Governance defines the roles of members and officers, and sets out the conduct expected in the Standing Orders.</p> <p>Officers and members undertaking online training on matters such as respect, equality and diversity.</p> <p>Following the election in 2017 training was provided to councillors on their role and on the Councillors Code of Conduct for members. Training has also been delivered specifically called "To Declare or Not to Declare" based on our newly developed Flowchart as adopted by the Standards Commission. In addition refresher training on issues such as planning has been undertaken for Area Committees where required. It has been recognised that further training on other aspects of the Code of Conduct would be of assistance to Members and this will be developed in 2018/2019 with input from the Standards Commission as appropriate.</p>	<p>...improvement planning</p> <p>Consider obligations under Incorporate Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 part 10</p> <p>Update Scheme of Governance to embed principles</p> <p>Consider development of guidance for those officers who are on external bodies</p> <p>Consider development of training on other aspects of the Code of Conduct</p>

<p>in dealing with different stakeholders and are put in place appropriate processes to ensure they continue to operate in practice</p>		<p>We regularly share briefings and advice notes from the Standards Commission with members and we prepare our own guidance on standards of conduct. There are newly developed principles which set out the standards expected of officers as part of the One Aberdeenshire engagement exercise.</p> <p>We have a Social Media policy in place and training has been delivered by corporate communications to support elected members.</p> <p>Our register of Members interests is published online and regularly updated. Members are contacted every six months as a reminder however they can contact officers to update their register at any time.</p> <p>We also have a hospitality and gifts policy for officers and a register which is regularly updated.</p> <p>We have politically restricted posts where considered appropriate.</p> <p>We prepare pre-election guidance for officers and members and offered a dedicated webpage and email address for pre-election queries.</p>	
<p>Theme 2 Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicating with members of staff</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>Services and teams have values and principles that are consistent across the Council. In 2017/2018, a widespread engagement exercise was undertaken with colleagues from across the Council, known as “One Aberdeenshire”. More than 600 colleagues across services took part in engagement activities resulting in 2000 hours of direct face to face engagement. The Council also engaged with a Pupil Participation Forum to obtain their views. The purpose of the exercise was to develop key principles and behaviours to guide staff in their work. The principles are now in the process of being embedded throughout the Council.</p> <p>The Scheme of Governance includes a Policy and Development Review Framework which sets out a clear</p>	<p>Communication and embedding of One Aberdeenshire Principles across the Council</p> <p>SPSO decisions to be reported to Audit Committee</p>

<p>Use the organisations shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships</p> <p>Sets of values against which decision making and actions can be judged</p>	<p>process to be followed where Council policy is being developed, including consultation requirements and relevant approvals, ensuring consistency across the organisation. A register of all Council policies has been developed and going forward services will be prompted to undertake policy reviews when required.</p> <p>Our Customer Services Charter sets out the standards we expect staff to meet when dealing with our customers and the service our customers can expect as a result. Some services have developed their own Charters. Less complaints were received in 2016/17 than in the previous year as evidenced by the Annual Complaints Performance Report for 2016/17. Out of a total of 1741 complaints, only 30 resulted in escalation to the Ombudsman (1.72%). The Report for 2017/2018 will be made available in summer 2018 and published on the Council's website. In addition, any decisions of the SPSSO will be reported to the Audit Committee in future for consideration.</p> <p>We provide Corporate and Service Inductions as standard across the Council.</p> <p>The Council's Leadership forum allows for sharing of ideas which meet regularly and brings together senior managers across the Council. The Council is in the process of developing a training programme for senior managers which will be mandatory.</p> <p>Line managers hold regular 121s and team meetings with staff, identifying objectives and development that aligns with Council's values and sharing knowledge. Staff also receive an Employee Annual Review which focusses on achievement in the current year and development for the year ahead however these will be phased out in 2018/2019 for non-teaching staff and replaced by a Personal Development Plan.</p>	
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		<p>Our Corporate Communications – Aberdeenshire Update is issued to staff on a regular basis. In addition, each Directorate will issue newsletters cross-service.</p> <p>Our reports provide clarity on the decision making process, with reference to relevant policy, Scheme of Governance, strategic plans (e.g. LDP). In 2018/2019 the Procedures Committee will consider changes to the corporate report template.</p>	
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Principle 4			
Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk			
Themes:			
Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny			
Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs			
Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place			
Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.			
What do we currently do?	How good are we?	How do we know?	What do we want to do now?
...taking stock	...evaluation	...evidence	...improvement planning
<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall</p> <p>Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and</p>	GOOD	<p>We have delivered training to Members on good and well evidenced reasonable decision making. This was done via Area Committees to all members following the election in 2017. In 2017/2018 there were no appeals lodged against Committee decisions on licensing applications. The number of appeals against Committee decisions on planning applications also reduced from 15 in 2016 to 9 in 2017.</p> <p>The Annual Audit Report documents the audit work throughout the Council and identifies recommendations for improvement.</p> <p>On an annual basis a shared risk assessment is undertaken by the local area network of external scrutiny bodies such as Audit Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and Scottish Housing Regulator. A local scrutiny plan is developed which identifies any risk based scrutiny required</p>	<p>Undertake refresher Member training on reasons for decision – facts, legal test, decision – particularly if against recommendations</p> <p>Rolling out webcasting of policy committees</p> <p>Enhance the role of the Audit Committee and consider whether additional changes require to be made to the Audit Committee. The Code of Corporate Governance will be overseen and developed further by the Audit Committee</p>

<p>employees against conflict of interests and put in procedures</p> <p>Develop and maintain an effective audit committee</p> <p>Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints</p>		<p>on the council and also confirms any other planned scrutiny, national scrutiny and performance audits that the council may be involved in. As with previous years, the 18/19 Local Scrutiny Plan has no risk based scrutiny identified.</p> <p>Our Audit Committee is chaired by member of opposition with a clear remit and responsibilities explicitly stated in Scheme of Governance part 2A. The role of the Audit Committee will be developed in 2018/2019 through a series of workshops with members.</p> <p>Part 2B of the Scheme of Governance clearly sets out the powers delegated to officers providing the framework within which they can carry out their duties.</p> <p>The Scheme of Governance delegates emergency powers to officers to enable urgent decision making with the requirement for a report to the relevant Committee thereafter, ensuring full transparency. This was recently reviewed by Full Council. In 2017/2018, emergency powers were used by officers on four occasions in matters of urgency, where it was impractical for a Committee to be convened.</p> <p>All minutes and public committee reports are published online and available for inspection, including declaration of interests</p> <p>We are currently webcasting all Full Council meetings, Policy Committee, Sustainability and Audit Committee.</p> <p>We have a clear complaints handling procedures in line with Scottish Public Service Ombudsman requirements and as above the number of complaints has reduced in the last year. Our Annual Complaints Performance Report is published on the Council's website.</p> <p>We have a clear procedure in place for dealing with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Each service has a</p>
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<p>Theme 2 Ensure those making decisions are provided with information that is fit for purpose, relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications</p> <p>Ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately</p>		<p>nominated FOI officer. In 2017, 96.70% of FOI requests received a response on time, compared to 93.95% in 2016.</p> <p>There are provisions in the Standing Orders for members of the public to take an active part in the work of Committees and there are also provisions for members to raise issues that are not on a committee agenda, for example by way of a Notice of Motion or by the Members Promoted Issue mechanism. In 2017/2018, four Member Promoted Issues were submitted and considered by committees. Notices of Motion were recently revised by the Procedures Committee who have recommended that guidance on Notices of Motion is included in the Scheme of Governance.</p>	
	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>Our corporate report template specifically includes a statement identifying the power in the Scheme of Governance permitting them to make that decision. There is also an assurance from the Monitoring Officer that the report is compliant with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.</p> <p>The risk section is a new addition to the report template and highlights any risks with particular reference to the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers.</p> <p>Professional advice and support is available to both officers and Members through monitoring officers and dedicated governance team. Solicitors hold regular meetings with service colleagues to ensure any legal issues can be identified and addressed at an early stage. Minutes are taken for some, but not all of these liaison meetings.</p> <p>All reports are monitored by a solicitor within the Governance Team, and solicitors attend meetings to ensure legally compliant decisions are made and their presences is minuted.</p> <p>We offer training for report authors and have a guidance note for officers on how to present to Committees.</p>	<p>Introducing Combined Impact Assessment to support decision making</p> <p>Ensure liaison meetings between legal and services are minuted and actions recorded.</p>

<p>Theme 3</p> <p>Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs</p> <p>Ensure that arrangements are in place for whistle blowing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GOOD</p>	<p>We have a Risk Management and Continuity Strategy in place and undertake Quarterly Risk Management Reviews</p> <p>Our Risk registers are regularly updated by officers and will be reported to Audit Committee going forward. The Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers are linked to in all committee reports and our Risk Steering Group meets regularly.</p> <p>We have a Whistleblowing Policy in place for staff which has been used this year. Consideration will be given in 2018/2019 as to how best we record reporting of whistleblowing incidents and evidence lessons learned.</p> <p>The remit of the Audit Committee includes responsibility for risk assessment arrangements and procedures.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Whistleblowing policy and procedure under review</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Risk Registers will be reported to Audit Committee</p>
<p>Theme 4</p> <p>Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them e.g. ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers for the benefit of the community</p> <p>Recognising the limits of lawful action and observe requirements in statute</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GOOD</p>	<p>The Council's Scheme of Governance provides the framework for lawful decision making</p> <p>The Council's Monitoring Officer and Monitoring Solicitors ensure lawful decision making through attendance at Committees and review of all reports. ALDO Training on the Scheme of Governance is available for all officers so that they are clear on what decisions are within their powers.</p> <p>Our Confident Governance scheme ensures that due diligence is completed on any outside bodies to which Members are appointed.</p> <p>We offer training for members in specific decision making areas e.g. licensing, planning, outside bodies. We have had no appeals lodged against licensing decisions in 2017/18 and the number of appeals against planning decisions has also reduced.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Continued training for Members via training sessions and ALDO</p>

Principle 5:			
Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective			
Themes:			
Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles			
Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group			
Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.			
What do we currently do?	How good are we?	How do we know?	What do we want to do now?
...taking stock	...evaluation	...evidence	...improvement planning
<p>Themes 1 & 2</p> <p>Assess the skills required by Members and Officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively</p> <p>Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance including the ability to scrutinise and challenge</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>Our Scheme of Governance clearly defines the roles of officers.</p> <p>We have a Formal CPD program in place which is complimented by informal sessions and briefings. Elected Members report</p> <p>We have a Corporate Induction in place across the council.</p> <p>We publish and regularly update guidance for report writing and report templates</p> <p>We currently have a requirement for Employee Annual Reviews to be undertaken as well as Chief Officer Appraisals. These assess development opportunities and identify appropriate activity for improvement. In 2018/2019 the Council will phase out Employee Annual Reviews for non-teaching staff with the introduction of a Personal</p>	<p>Implementation of additional learning and promotion of ALDO courses.</p> <p>Introduction of Personal Performance Plan and phasing out of Employee Annual Reviews for non-teaching staff</p> <p>Roll out of Service Manager programme</p> <p>Training on updated Scheme of Governance</p>

<p>Theme 3 Ensure effective arrangements are in place to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to join as an officer or Councillor</p> <p>Ensure that career structures are in place for Members and Officers to encourage participation and development</p>	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>Performance Plan for officers. The focus of the Plan will be on line managers and employees having regular conversations about performance and career enhancement rather than a once a year meeting. This supports a change in philosophy/approach to improving personal performance and employee engagement.</p> <p>Our Arcadia pages have links to our policies, procedures and guidance. Online training through ALDO is available on a range of subjects and accessible to both Members and Officers.</p> <p>Training is undertaken by officers across the Council and the Learning and Development Team (L&D) have a range of courses that officers can attend on a variety of subjects including management and practicalities. The Team also offers professional vocational courses for staff.</p> <p>In 2017/18, L&D engaged with service managers across the Council to develop an induction programme for managers at that level. The programme will be rolled out in 2018/19 and will consist of a combination of online material and face to face workshops. It will also offer a peer support network for service managers facilitated by L&D.</p> <p>Each service also has its own training budget, enabling line managers to identify individual or team needs and address any skills or knowledge gaps through tailored training and courses. External providers are used where required.</p>	
		<p>Prior to the elections in May 2017, the Council held a number of public candidate days to inform members of the public wishing to stand for election. In addition, the Council has a Guide on the Role and Duties of an Aberdeenshire Councillor which is published on the Council website.</p> <p>The Council regularly attends job and career fairs at schools, colleges and universities to promote the organisation as an employer of choice for young people. This is enhanced by attendance at job and career events</p>	<p>Implementation of High Potential Programme</p>

		<p>across the region to attract talented candidates from a diverse talent pool. We have an Apprenticeship programme (50+) and offer a number of graduate roles, for example we recruited two trainee solicitors in late 2017 to commence their training with the Council in 2018. This recognises our commitment to growing our talent from within. Our careers page on the Council website encourages applications from all sections of the community and we offer staff incentives such as flexible working and an extensive employee benefits programme.</p> <p>The Council is recognised through the Department of Work & Pensions as a 'Disability Confident' employer and works in partnership with Skills Development Scotland as a key partner in the PACE programme of promoting job and career opportunities within the Council to former oil and gas workers.</p> <p>We have robust recruitment processes in place to ensure appointments are made on merit and are aimed at attracting talented individuals to the organisation. This is supplemented by a variety of job marketing tools, promoting opportunities to a diverse audience with the required skills and behaviours.</p> <p>The Council has an Employment Support Team in place which coordinates the Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership. The Team assists anyone in Aberdeenshire who is actively seeking employment or looking to enter education or training to gain full-time or additional employment.</p> <p>Through 121s and Employee Annual Reviews (to be replaced by the Personal Performance Plan) career progression and enhancement opportunities can be identified within the Council. Secondment opportunities are offered on a regular basis. The Council has clear staffing structures in place with job descriptions and gradings.</p>	
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Principle 6:			
Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability			
Themes:			
Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships			
Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning			
What do we currently do?	How good are we?	How do we know?	What do we want to do now?
...taking stock	...evaluation	...evidence	...improvement planning
<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Make clear to all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and what for</p> <p>Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationship</p> <p>Produce an annual report on activity of scrutiny function</p>	GOOD	<p>We set out the Council and leadership structures on our website and our Scheme of Governance clearly outlines the delegation of powers to both Committee and Officers.</p> <p>We use a range of engagement and participatory approaches e.g. Budget Engagement and developing Council priorities.</p> <p>We webcast Full Council meetings and are in the process of rolling out webcasting for Policy committee meetings.</p> <p>We undertake Public performance reporting.</p> <p>We publish our Scheme of Governance online.</p> <p>Part 4 of our Scheme of Governance requires an annual report on scrutiny for every committee.</p>	<p>Approve and implement Engagement Policy (also Principles 2 and 5)</p>

<p>Theme 2 Clear channels of communication Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality Ensure arrangements in place to enable the Council to engage effectively with all sections of community. Establish clear policy on what we will consult on</p>		<p>We have clear consultation arrangements in our Policy Development and Review Frame work under Part 4 of our Scheme of Governance.</p>	
	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>We have a Communications strategy in place which sets out how we will communicate with our customers together with a Social Media policy. There is a Consultation code of practice and database which reflects National Standards for Engagement however an Engagement Policy and updated supporting procedures and guidance is under development to better support officers, inform, engage and involve communities appropriately. We also have a Community engagement strategy in place. We webcast Full Council meetings. All Council meetings are held in public and our Standing Orders have a procedure in place for public participation at meetings. We have a community engagement steering group. We undertake a combination of consultation approaches including online, digital and face to face. We adhere to national standards for community engagement.</p>	<p>Consultation toolkit and database being updated as part of Engagement Policy</p> <p>Develop guidance to help officers know when and whom to inform, engage, consult, and involve</p>