

Annex 4 - Somerset Council Local Code of Corporate Governance 2023/24

The importance of good corporate governance

Good and effective governance ensures that a Council conducts its operations with integrity, accountability, and transparency, thus achieving its objectives and serving the public interest. Here's why it's fundamental to how we work:

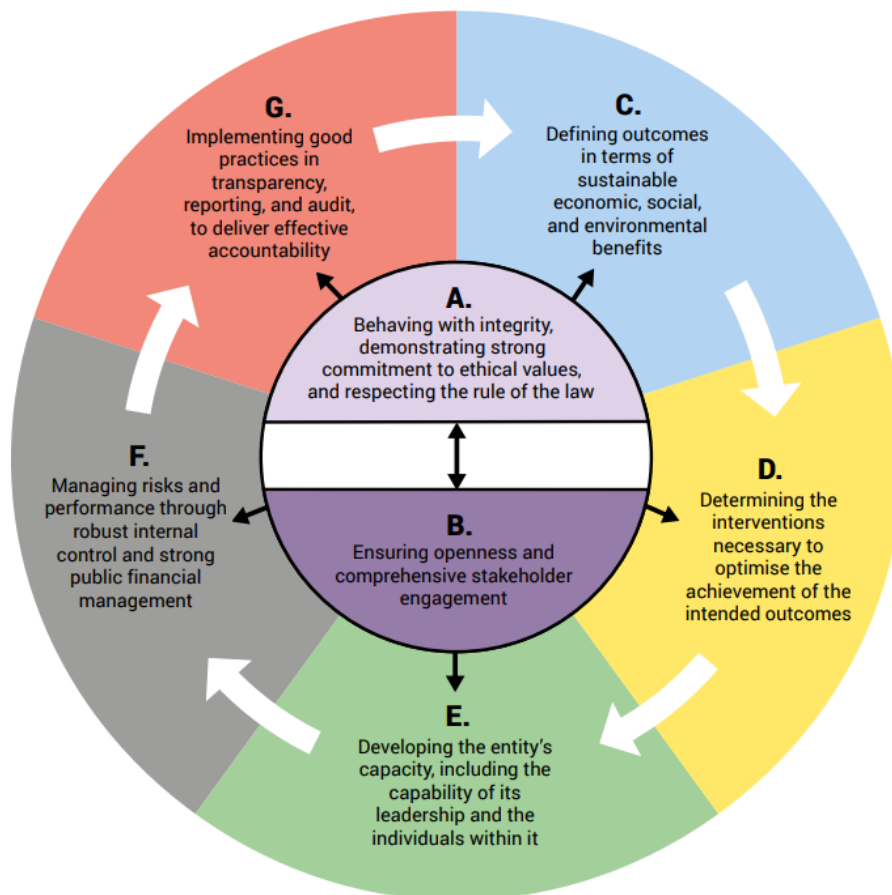
- **Trust and Credibility:** It builds public trust and confidence in the Council's operations by ensuring decisions are made ethically and transparently.
- **Efficient Resource Use:** It ensures public funds and resources are used economically, efficiently, and effectively, providing value for money.
- **Risk Management:** Effective governance involves robust risk management practices, reducing the likelihood of errors, fraud, and other issues.
- **Sustainable Outcomes:** It helps achieve long-term sustainable economic, societal, and environmental outcomes, benefiting the community now and in the future.
- **Accountability and Responsibility:** Ensures that decision-makers are held accountable for their actions and decisions, fostering a culture of responsibility.
- **Legal Compliance:** It ensures compliance with laws and regulations, avoiding legal penalties and maintaining the Council's integrity.
- **Community Engagement:** Promotes active engagement with the community, ensuring that the needs and views of residents are considered in decision-making.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Facilitates continuous improvement by regularly evaluating performance and making necessary adjustments to enhance service delivery.

Corporate governance is about the processes by which the Council is directed, controlled, led, and held to account. It encompasses the culture and values that influence how councillors and employees think and act. Essentially, if management is about running the Council, corporate governance ensures that it is run properly. Given the Council's complexity and its impact on residents, businesses, and organisations in Somerset, it is crucial to maintain confidence in our corporate governance. This involves:

- Engaging with and being accountable to our citizens and stakeholders effectively as a democratic body.
- Conducting our business in accordance with the law and proper standards.
- Properly accounting for public money and using it economically, efficiently, and effectively.
- Ensuring that controls are proportionate to risk and do not impede performance.
- Continuously improving our functions in terms of effectiveness, quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, and innovation.

- Fulfilling our purpose and meeting our priorities as outlined in our Council Plan.

We are committed to the seven principles of Good Governance as set out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016).



Our local code of governance is underpinned by these principles:

- Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Principle C: Defining the vision and outcomes for the local area and determining the actions necessary to achieve the intended outcomes
- Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Monitoring and Reporting

The Council will undertake an annual review of its governance arrangements to ensure continuing compliance with best practice to provide assurance that corporate governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively in practice. Where reviews of the corporate governance arrangements have revealed gaps, actions will be planned to enhance the governance arrangements accordingly.

The Council will prepare an Annual Governance Statement which will be submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration and will form part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.

The Annual Governance Statement will include:

- an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance (incorporating the system of internal control) and reference to the authority's code of governance;
- a reference to and assessment of the effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework and the role of those responsible for the development and maintenance of the governance environment;
- an opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework;
- a reference to how issues raised in the previous year's annual governance statement have been resolved; and
- a conclusion including a commitment to monitoring implementation as part of the next annual review.

The Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.

In reviewing and approving the Annual Governance Statement, members will be provided with detailed information regarding the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and system of internal control and how these address the key risks faced by the Council. Those Assurances will be available from a wide range of sources, including internal and external audit, a range of external inspectorates and managers from across the Council.

The Council will continually strive to operate an assurance framework, embedded into its business processes, that maps corporate objectives to risks, controls and assurances. This framework and regular reports on its application and effectiveness will provide members with assurances to support the Annual Governance Statement and will help members to identify whether corporate objectives and significant business risks are being properly managed.

Governance Structure and Responsibilities	
Full Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Council consists of 110 Councillors. A member role includes representing the needs, priorities and aspirations of the Somerset Council and the people of the Somerset Council area. • Approves the budget and policy framework. • Approves the Constitution (including Officer Scheme of Delegation, Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes committees to discharge non-executive functions.
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main decision-making body of the Council responsible for executive functions. Chair by the Leader of the Council appointed by the council with responsibility for executive functions and who appoints a Deputy Leader and Executive members who have responsibility for portfolios.
Audit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides independent assurance to the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management framework and internal control environment. Approves the Local Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts.
Scrutiny Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview and scrutiny are a statutory function, and the Council appoints members to its 5 Scrutiny Committees – Adults and Health Committee; Children and Families Committee; Climate and Place Committee; Communities Committee and Corporate and Resources Committee.
Head of Paid Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall corporate management and operational responsibility for the council (including management for all employees) Provision of professional advice to all parties in the decision-making process and, responsibility for a system of record keeping for all the council's decisions, representing the council on partnerships and external bodies. Determines how the council's functions are discharged, the number and grade of Officers required to discharge the functions and how Officers are organised.
Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for developing and maintaining the council's governance, risks, and control framework. Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making and the administration of financial affairs. Providing advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues, and will support and advise Councillors and Officers in their respective roles. Contributes to the effective corporate management and governance of the council.
Monitoring Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, reviewing, and maintaining the Constitution. Ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making. Supporting Standards Committee, conducting investigations, and undertaking other actions in respect of matters referred to him/her by the Standards Committee. Proper Officer for access to information. Contributes to the effective corporate management and governance of the council.
Corporate Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements the policy and budgetary framework set by the Council and provides advice to Cabinet and the Council on the development of future policy and budgetary issues. Oversees the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and implementation of Council Policy.
Heads of Service and Service Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for developing, maintaining, and implementing the Council's governance, risk, and control framework. Contribute to the effective corporate management and governance of the Council.

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

A1 Behaving with Integrity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood (built on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)) Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions 	
Evidence	Evidence Owner
Officer Declarations of Interests.	
Constitution, Council Plan and Service Plans.	Chief Executive
Officers' Code of Conduct.	Chief Executive
Organisation values and behaviours.	Chief Executive
Council Plan.	Chief Executive
Member and staff involvement with developing values.	Chief Executive
Members' Code of Conduct and Member Role Descriptions.	Monitoring Officer
Members induction and training sessions on Code of Conduct.	Monitoring Officer
All members sign acceptance of office.	Monitoring Officer
Statutory Register of Members Interests.	Monitoring Officer
Constitution & Governance Committee (quarterly & annual review by of constitution).	Monitoring Officer
Tell Local Councillor Protocol.	Monitoring Officer
Protocol for Member / Officer Relations.	Monitoring Officer
decision making requirements	Monitoring Officer
Standards Committee with responsibility for member conduct policy and protocols	Monitoring Officer
Constitution reviewed annually by Full Council.	Monitoring Officer
Formal records / minutes of meetings, regular reminders of declaration of interests / gifts and hospitality.	Monitoring Officer
Requirements of decision report templates (and guidance) to specify implications of proposed decisions for decision makers to have regard to.	Monitoring Officer
Guidance, support and report templates available for report authors on the Intranet site.	Monitoring Officer
Registers of interests, gifts and hospitality (Members and Officers).	Monitoring Officer
Whistleblowing policy in place and updated as necessary.	Monitoring Officer
How to complain about the conduct of a member – policy and procedure on website.	Monitoring Officer
Regular reports on member complaints for Somerset Council and the 279 city, town and parish councils to Standards Committee.	Monitoring Officer
Complaints procedures for service users	Executive Director – Communities
Equality Diversity and Inclusion training.	Executive Director – Strategy, Workforce & Localities.

The Council has in place arrangements and HR policies to ensure that core corporate policies and processes are designed in conformity with ethical standards and are reviewed to ensure they are operating effectively.	Executive Director - Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Communications, press releases, Leadership and Staff Q&A , Dragons Pen.	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Financial Regulations	Service Director – Finance & Procurement
Contract Procedure Rules	Service Director – Finance & Procurement
Staff Performance Appraisals.	Service Director - Workforce
Dignity at Work Code of Practice	Service Director – Workforce
A2 - Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation’s ethical standards and performance • Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation’s culture and operation • Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values • Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the organisation 	
Evidence	Evidence Owner
Organisation values and behaviours	Chief Executive
Council Plan	Chief Executive
Organisation values and behaviours	Chief Executive
Officers Code of Conduct	Chief Executive
Organisation values and behaviours	Chief Executive
Member’s Code of Conduct – advice to members from Monitoring Officer	Monitoring Officer
Maintaining Standards Committee with responsibility for standards of conduct	Monitoring Officer
Regular awareness and promotion of Codes of Conduct and Gifts and Hospitality declaration requirements	Monitoring Officer
Member Induction and training in Code of Conduct.	Monitoring Officer
Zero tolerance to fraud and bribery	Executive Director- Resources & Corporate Services
Contract Procedure Rules	Executive Director- Resources & Corporate Services
Modern Slavery Statement	Executive Director- Resources & Corporate Services and Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Social Value Policy and Guidance	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce & Localities

Protocols to work in partnership and joint commissioning boards i.e. Somerset Board	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Recruitment Policy	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Appraisal processes take account of values and ethical behaviour	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Procurement policy / strategy	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Contract Procedure Rules	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Contracts and partnership agreements to include appropriate requirements within the Terms & Conditions	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Officer Inductions	Service Director-Workforce
A3 – Respecting the rule of law	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations • Creating the conditions to ensure statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements • Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders • Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively • Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively 	
Evidence	Evidence Owner
Officers Code of Conduct	Chief Executive
Organisational structure and senior leadership	Chief Executive
External (e.g. inspection/assessment, LGA peer review, mentoring and support and wider sector-led improvement activity)	Chief Executive
Council Plan	Chief Executive
Statutory Officers Board oversight of governance	Chief Executive
Complaints policy and process	Chief Executive
Cultural changes to encourage more open culture feedback i.e. Staff Q&A and Staff Surveys.	Chief Executive
Democratic Services and corporate support to Committees	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer
Council's Constitution	Monitoring Officer
Oversight of adherence to legislation and statutory responsibilities	Monitoring Officer
Members Code of Conduct	Monitoring Officer
Whistleblowing policy	Monitoring Officer
Key member roles and responsibilities in the Constitution	Monitoring Officer
Member / Officer Protocol.	Monitoring Officer
Constitution and Officer Scheme of Delegation	Monitoring Officer
Decision reports include a requirement for officers to detail financial and legal implications.	Monitoring Officer
Decision reports include a requirement for officers to detail legal implications.	Monitoring Officer

Legal Services encourage services to seek early legal advice on legality of proposed actions	Monitoring Officer
Oversight by five Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee	Monitoring Officer & Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Customer Panel	Executive Director-Communities
Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (CIPFA 2015) and the role of Head of Internal Audit	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Sustaining and delivering 18 Local Community Networks	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Anti-fraud and corruption policy and practices	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Local Government Transparency Act publications	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Inductions & Learning Centre	Service Director-Workforce
Staff job descriptions and assignments	Service Director-Workforce

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

B1 – Openness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear 	
Chief Executive Q&A sessions for managers and staff	Chief Executive
Information Governance, Freedom of Information procedures and services	Monitoring Officer
Constitution details the Access to Information requirements in relation to Forward Plans, agendas, meetings, reports minutes and decision records.	Monitoring Officer
Decision and report templates meet Access to Information requirements as do decision records, summaries of decisions, summaries of outcomes and minutes.	Monitoring Officer
Registers of Members and Officers Interests	Monitoring Officer
Constitution details the Access to Information requirements in relation to agendas, meetings, reports minutes and decision records.	Monitoring Officer
Executive Forward Plan and Committee Work Programmes published on agendas and website	Monitoring Officer
Publication of decisions, minutes and reports on Council's website	Monitoring Officer
Meetings are held in public unless good reason to go into private session for confidentiality	Monitoring Officer

Decision making protocols/guidance	Monitoring Officer
Report pro-formas/templates provide all necessary information for decision makers	Monitoring Officer
Record of professional advice in reaching decisions – record of financial, legal and procurement advice provided by officers is included in decision reports	Monitoring Officer
Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports is respected and adhered to.	Monitoring Officer
Local Government Transparency Act publications	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Open Communications & Press Releases	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Regular budget monitoring and performance reports to Executive and Scrutiny	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Details of active consultations on website	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
B2 – Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively 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 	
Connect Somerset Champions - VCFSE	Executive Director-Childrens
Somerset Rivers Authority	Executive Director-Climate & Place
VCFSE Memorandum of Understanding	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
VCFSE Core funding agreement	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Partnership Register and agreements	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Somerset Board	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
VCFSE MoU	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Partnership Register	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Armed Forces Covenant	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities

Partnership frameworks exist on an informal and flexible basis and are governed by agreements, protocols or memoranda of understanding, as appropriate	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Annual review of outside bodies	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
B3 – Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users 	
The role of the elected member and their responsibilities for communities in their divisions	Monitoring Officer
Consultation evaluation and feedback	Monitoring Officer
Somerset UK Youth Parliament	Executive Director-Children and Families
School places forecasting	Executive Director-Children and Families
Co-design & co-production in Children & Adult Services	Executive Director-Children and Families
SiCC and SLCC engagement groups	Executive Director-Children and Families
Parent Carer Forum	Executive Director-Children and Families
Budget Consultation	Executive Director-Communities
Complaints Policy and procedures	Executive Director-Communities
Customer Panel	Executive Director-Communities
Joint Strategic Needs assessment	Executive Director-Communities
Council Housing strategy	Executive Director-Communities
Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25-2026/27	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Use of citizen space	Executive Director-Public Health
Consultation and Engagement strategy and web page	Service Director-Strategy & Performance

Communications Protocol for members	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Consultation and Engagement web page	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Reporting on consultation outcomes	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Consulting with all groups whether members of the public, equalities groups/networks or organised groups	Service Director-Strategy & Performance

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

C1 – Defining Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation’s purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation’s • Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer • Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available • Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes • Managing service users’ expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available 	
Council plan	Chief Executive
Vision and values	Chief Executive
Financial Strategy 2024/25	Chief Executive
Community engagement and involvement	Executive Director-Communities
Learning from complaints	Executive Director-Communities
Customer strategy and contact centre	Executive Director-Communities
Equalities Objectives	Executive Director-Public Health
Equalities Impact Assessments to accompany decision including budget	Executive Director-Public Health
Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25-2026/27	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Monthly budget monitoring reports	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Commissioning and procurement outcome delivery	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Annual statement of accounts	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Risk management strategy	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services

Strategic and operational risk registers and reporting	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Audit Committee	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Community Engagement and Consultation	Executive Director-Strategy, workforce & localities
VCFSE MoU	Executive Director-Strategy, workforce & localities
Service/business plans	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Performance reporting	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Quarterly performance reports	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
C2 – Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision • Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints • Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs • Ensuring fair access to services 	
Climate Emergency Strategy	Executive Director Climate & Place
Access to care in line with Care Act 2014	Executive Director-Adults
Primary and Secondary Access criteria in respect of access to education	Executive Director-Childrens Services
Customer Strategy & contact centre	Executive Director-Communities
Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25-2026/27	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Capital programme and capital investment strategy	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Cumulative Impact Assessment - MTFP	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Somerset Board	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Record of decision making and supporting materials – decision making report template includes requirement to consider	Monitoring Officer

implications under Equalities, Community Safety, Climate Change and Sustainability, H&S, Health & Wellbeing and Social Value	
Social value in decisions and procurement	Service Director-Finance & Procurement

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

D1 – Determining Interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided 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 	
Record of decision making and supporting materials – decision making report template includes requirement to consider implications under Equalities, Community Safety, Climate Change and Sustainability, H&S, Health & Wellbeing and Social Value. As well as other options considered and Reasons for Recommendations	Monitoring Officer
Customer Panel and Customer Feedback	Executive Director-Communities
Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Commissioning and procurement processes	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Budget Consultation	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Service plans	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
D2 – Planning Interventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances 	
Executive Forward Plan and Committee Work Programmes	Monitoring Officer
Regular Lead Member Reports to Full Council	Monitoring Officer
Customer Panel	Executive Director-Communities
Strategic Risk Register	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services

Strategic Risk Register and Audit Committee overview	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Regular review of MTFP	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Robust budgeting process and monitoring and reporting to Members	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Budget consultation	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Partnership frameworks exist on an informal and flexible basis and are governed by agreements, protocols or memoranda of understanding, as appropriate	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Somerset Board	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Financial regulations	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Contract arrangements subject to regular review	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Procurement strategy	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Policy Review dates	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Public consultation	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Staff consultation	Service Director- Workforce
D2 – Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term 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 Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning 	
Record of decision making and supporting materials – decision making report template includes requirement to consider implications under Equalities, Community Safety, Climate Change and Sustainability, H&S, Health & Wellbeing and Social Value	Monitoring Officer
Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Financial Strategy	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services

Procurement decisions require consideration of economic, social and environmental issues to ensure obligations under Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 are met	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Service Plans	Service Director-Strategy & Performance

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

E1 – Developing the entity's capacity

- Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness
- Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently
- Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved
- Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources

Organisational structures	Chief Executive
VCFSE MoU	Executive Director-Public Health
Asset and Services Devolution Framework	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Somerset Board	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce and Localities
Asset Management Strategy	Service Director-Strategic Asset Management
Property & Commercial Investment sub-committee	Service Director-Strategic Asset Management
Somerset Council People Strategy (under Development in 2024)	Service Director-Workforce
Establishment Control and Recruitment Board	Service Director-Workforce

E2 – Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

- Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained
- Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body
- Ensuring the Leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Chief executive leads 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
- Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:
 - ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis ○ ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external ● Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation ● Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections ● Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs ● 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 	
Performance coaching/management for officers	Chief Executive
Succession planning	Chief Executive
Service specific review	Chief Executive
LGA Peer Review	Chief Executive
Public Question Time on committee agendas	Monitoring Officer
Public Participation section of Constitution	Monitoring Officer
Forward Plan of Key Decisions	Monitoring Officer
18 Local Community Networks	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Consultations	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Consultation and Engagement web page	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Induction for officers and members	Service Director- Workforce
Membership of professional bodies	Service Director- Workforce
Corporate learning and development	Service Director- Workforce
Job descriptions	Service Director- Workforce
Training and development plan	Service Director- Workforce
Staff development plans linked to appraisals – performance management for officers which includes personal development plans	Service Director- Workforce
Implementing appropriate HR policies and ensuring that they are working effectively	Service Director- Workforce
Human resource policies	Service Director- Workforce
Support networks and resources – Care First	Service Director- Workforce
Occupational health	Service Director- Workforce
Health and Well-Being Champions	Service Director- Workforce

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

F1 – Managing Risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated 	
Decision reports consider risks	Monitoring Officer
Risk management strategy	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Strategic and operational risk registers and reporting	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Audit Committee	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Risk management system	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Strategic and operational risk registers with risks allocated to owners	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Quarterly performance reports	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
F2 – Managing Performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review 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 	
Service Standards	Chief Executive
Record of professional advice in reaching decisions – record of financial, legal and procurement advice provided by officers is included in decision reports.	Monitoring Officer
Record of decision making and supporting materials – decision making report template includes requirement to consider implications under Equalities, Community Safety, Climate Change and Sustainability, H&S, Health & Wellbeing and Social Value	Monitoring Officer
Publication of agenda and minutes of meetings	Monitoring Officer
Quarterly performance reports	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
F3 – Managing Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring 	
Data management framework and procedures	Monitoring Officer
Designated DP officer	Monitoring Officer
DP policies and procedures	Monitoring Officer
Data sharing agreements, including processing requirements where appropriate	Monitoring Officer
Data sharing register	Monitoring Officer
Internal audit reviews include coverage of data quality procedures and reports and data validation procedures where appropriate	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
F4 – Strong public financial management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls 	
Robust financial management framework	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Regular budget management monitoring reports	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Financial Regulations	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Regular Budget monitoring reporting	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Audit reviews	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Provision of appropriate training to ensure staff have appropriate skills to support the delivery of services and transformational change as well as securing good stewardship	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities

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

G1 – Implementing good practice in transparency	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand 	
Council report templates to ensure consistency and appropriate use of language	Monitoring Officer

Audit reviews	Executive Director-Resources & Corporate Services
Website	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
Compliance with Local Government Transparency Code 2015	Executive Director-Strategy, Workforce & Localities
G2 – Implementing good practice in reporting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way Ensuring members and senior management own the results reported 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 (the annual governance statement) Ensuring that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations 	
Annual Governance Statement and action plan	Chief Executive
Statutory Officers Board	Chief Executive
Peer reviews	Chief Executive
Appropriate approvals	Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer
Annual Governance Statement	Monitoring Officer
Annual financial statements	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Statement of Accounts for five legacy councils	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Audit Plan	Executive Director-Corporate Resources & Services
Appropriate provision included in contracts and memoranda of	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Understanding including financial governance arrangements	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Internal Audit Plan	Service Director-Finance & Procurement
Quarterly Performance Reports	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
Format follows best practice	Service Director-Strategy & Performance
G3 – Assurance and effective accountability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met 	
LGA Peer Reviews	Chief Executive
CQC Inspections	Chief Executive
Ofsted Inspections	Chief Executive
Annual Governance Statement	Monitoring Officer
Ownership of actions	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010)	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Effective internal audit function – annual report and regular attendance at audit committee	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Audit reviews	Executive Director- Corporate Resources & Services
Partnership frameworks exist on an informal and flexible basis and are governed by agreements, protocols or memoranda of understanding, as appropriate	Executive Director- Strategy, Workforce & Localities

Seven principles for the conduct of individuals in public life

The governance framework is supported by the seven **Principles of Public Life**, which set the standards of conduct and behaviour to which Councillors and employees should aspire in their day-to-day dealings (see **Members' Code of Conduct**).

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

3. Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office

5. Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.