



**Somerset County Council
Corporate Governance Code
2019-2021**

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL: GOVERNANCE CODE

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this Code is to state the importance to the Council of good corporate governance and to set out the Council’s commitment to the principles involved.
2. The Code is based on guidance to all UK local authorities.
3. The Code is included in the Council’s constitution and therefore applies to all members and employees of the Council and also to any individuals or bodies authorised to act on its behalf.
4. How the effectiveness of the Code is reviewed is set out in Section 4.
5. The Code will be reviewed in its entirety by no later than 31 March 2022, but minor reviews and updates will be made annually as required.

Approvals	
Approved by Cabinet & SLT	May 2020

Lead Officers:

Scott Wooldridge, Monitoring Officer

Jason Vaughan, Director of Finance

Version Control		
Key Changes (such as for changes in legislation and reporting arrangements)	Agreed By/date	Issue Date
Minor Changes to reflect: •		
To be renewed no later than 31 March 2022		

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SECTION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- 1.1. Corporate Governance refers to the processes by which organisations such as the Council are directed, controlled, led and held to account. It is also about culture and values - the way that councillors (members) and employees think and act. In summary, if management is about running the Council, corporate governance is about seeing that it is run properly.
- 1.2. The Council is a complex organisation which affects all who live and work in Somerset and businesses and organisations that are based here. It is therefore essential that there is confidence in our corporate governance, and the Council must therefore ensure that:
 - as a democratic body, we engage with and account to our citizens and stakeholders effectively;
 - we conduct our business in accordance with the law and to proper standards;
 - public money is properly accounted for and is used economically, efficiently and effectively;
 - controls are proportionate to risk so as not to impede performance;
 - we continuously improve the way in which we function, in terms of effectiveness, quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability and innovation; and
 - we fulfil our purpose and meet our priorities as set out in our Council Plan.
- 1.3. **The Council is therefore committed to good corporate governance** – to doing the right things in the right way for the right people in a way which is timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable. This Code sets out that commitment and how we evidence it.
- 1.4. **This commitment includes improving governance** on a continuing basis across the Council as a whole, through a process of evaluation and review. This is detailed further in **Section 4**.

SECTION 2: THE BASIS OF THIS CODE

2.1 This Code is based on guidance provided to all UK local authorities¹ which are centred on **seven Core Principles**², designed to underpin the governance arrangements of all public sector bodies.

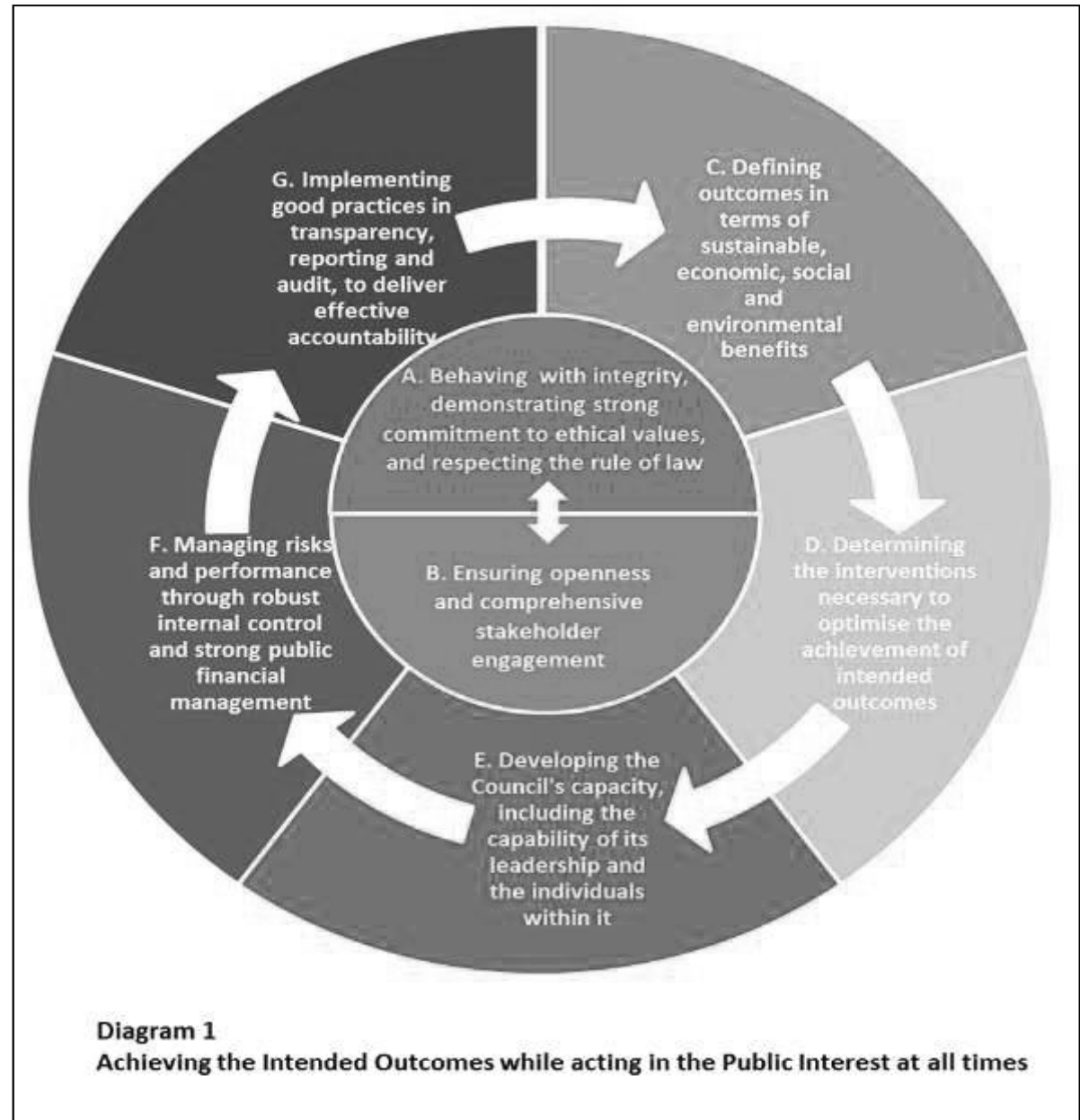
2.2 These Core Principles and how they relate with each other is illustrated in **Diagram 1**.

2.3 This also shows that:

- i) Core Principles A and B are fundamental to the application of the other principles,
- ii) good governance is dynamic,
- iii) good governance requires all of the principles to be met.

¹ 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework, 2016', issued jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

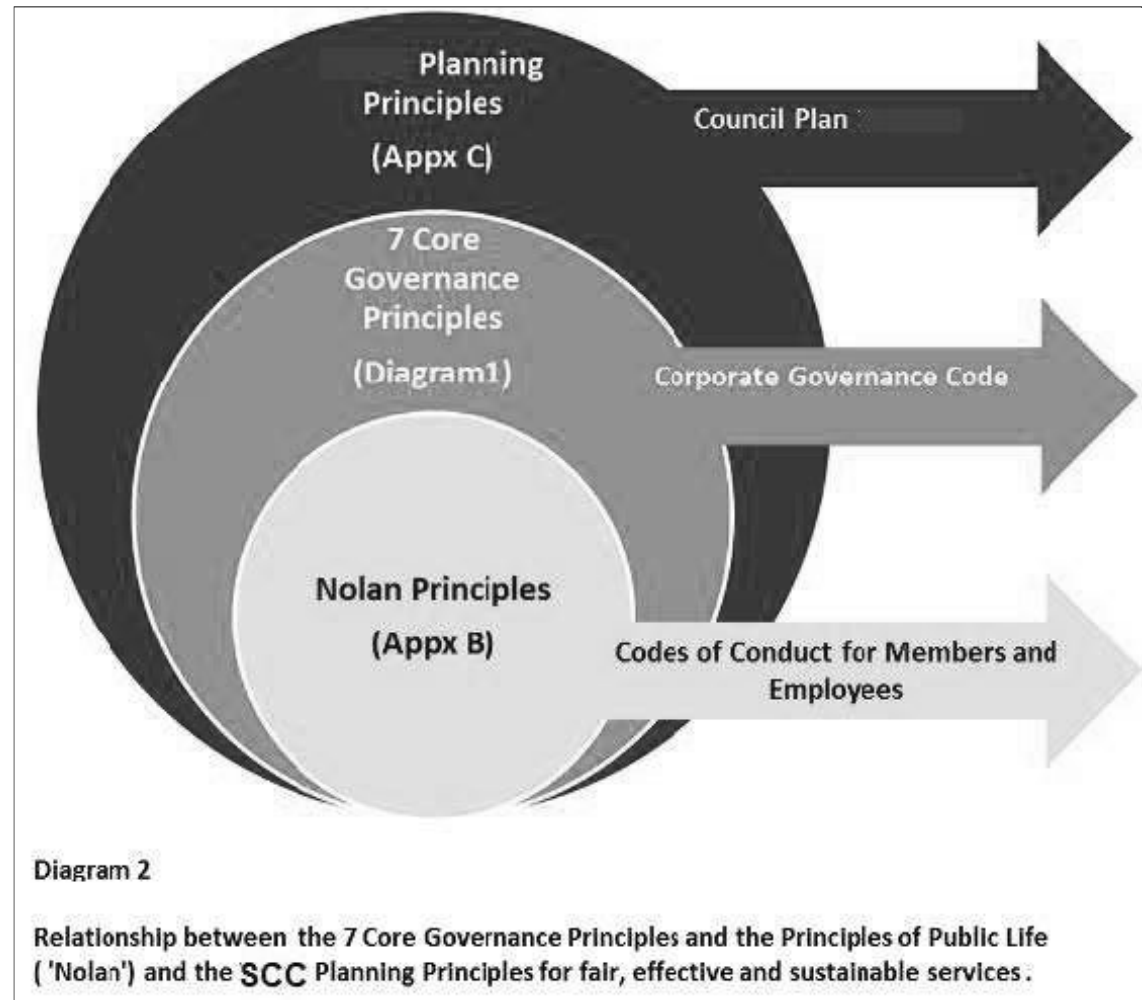
² From the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/International Federation of Accountants, 2014)



2.4 This Code sets out our commitment to all seven of the Core Principles shown in Diagram 1 and to the various elements of our governance framework – the policies, strategies and processes - which help us to ensure that the principles are met (**Section 3**).

2.5 A summary of the whole governance framework is illustrated in **Appendix A**.

2.6 Since effective Corporate Governance relies on the way that councillors (members) and employees think and act, the Code also recognises the importance of the seven 'Principles of Public Life' (the 'Nolan Principles')³ which are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders. These support the seven Core Principles of this Code which in turn underpin the Council's approach to planning fair, effective and sustainable services and its responsibilities for sustainable development. This relationship is illustrated in **Diagram 2**.



³ See Appendix B

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

Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

Behaving with Integrity

A1. 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

A2. 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. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)

A3. Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions

A4. Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively

What is in place to support this

[Members Code of Conduct](#)

Officer Standards of Conduct

All members sign acceptance of office

Officers sign contracts of employment

Standards Committee / regular reports to Council (six monthly).

Regular review of the Constitution via Constitution Committee (quarterly & annual review by council).

No member appraisals in place but Personal Development Plans are offered to elected members.

Core and Key Value expectations

Our Working Agreement

[Staff Awards](#)

[Staff Performance Appraisals](#)

Tell Local Councillor Protocol

Protocol for Member / Officer Relations

Maintaining a Committee with responsibility for member conduct policy and protocols

Constitution reviewed annually by Full Council and at least quarterly by Constitution Committee.

[Core Brief and Members Core Brief regularly include relevant content around conduct and expectations / guidance.](#)

[Members Portal](#)

Formal records /minutes of meetings, regular reminders reference declaration of interests / gifts and hospitality

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Guidance and templates available for report authors on the Intranet site.
Whistleblowing policy in place and updated as necessary and publicised in-house (not available on the website)
Member complaints policy online
Members Code of Conduct and Officer Standards of Behaviour both have guidance on declaration of interests.
Anti-fraud and corruption Policy & reports
HR Policies & Codes of conduct
SCC Internal Policy Register
SCC Policies, Plans and Strategies Framework
Annual Team Health Check

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values
A5. Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance
A6. Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation
A7. Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values
A8. 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

What is in place to support this
Constitution contains guidance on decision making requirements
Member's Code of Conduct requires adherence to the Nolan Principles.
Maintaining a committee with responsibility for standards of
Regular Constitution and Standards Committee reports to
Regular conduct content and guidance in Core Brief and Member Core Brief.
Requirements of decision report templates (and guidance) to specify implications of proposed decisions for decision makers to have regard to
Core and Key Value expectations
Staff Awards
Staff Performance Appraisals
Constitution and policy content.
Member Induction and training in Code of Conduct.
Officer Inductions
No member appraisals in place but Personal Development Plans are offered to elected members.
Staff appraisals
Core and Key Values

Respecting the rule of law

A9. Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations

A10. Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements

A11. Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders

A12. Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements

- ◆Social Value Policy and Guidance - compliance evidenced through the Commissioning Gateway submissions.
- ◆Market Position Statements (Adults / Children's and high level.
- ◆Protocols to work in partnership and joint commissioning boards / agreements.

What is in place to support this

Constitution sets out legal requirements around decision making and other constitutional arrangements, report templates and guidance available on Intranet

Staff Responsibilities

SLT Assurance Statements

Key member roles and responsibilities in the Constitution.

Community Governance support to members and committees.

Member / Officer Protocol.

Inductions & Learning Centre

Key decision process

Tell Local Councillor Protocol.

[Somerset Elections Protocol.](#)

Protection of Statutory Roles & Key posts

Decision reports include a requirement for officers to detail legal implications.

Safeguarding Policies

Recorded advice to Social Workers

Constitution sets the framework, decision reports include a requirement for officers to detail legal implications.

Decision report templates and guidance for completion.

Policies and procedures in place

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Local government is run for the public good, organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

Openness

B1. Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness

B2. 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

B3. 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

B4. Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

B5. 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

B6. Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively

What is in place to support this

Governance Board Transparency Code Annual Assurance Report 2019

Local Government Transparency Act publications

Open Communications & Press Releases

Constitution details the Access to Information requirements in relation to agendas, meetings, reports minutes and decision

Decision and report templates meet Access to Information requirements as do decision records, summaries of decisions, summaries of outcomes and minutes.

Community Governance Website

Constitution details the Access to Information requirements in relation to agendas, meetings, reports minutes and decision

Decision and report guidance and templates meet Access to Information requirements as do decision records, summaries of decisions, summaries of outcomes and minutes.

What is in place to support this

Stronger Communities (MTFP Theme)

Stronger Communities Working Group aligned to Health and Wellbeing Board

Development of joint commissioning / development of joint health and social care strategy

Partnership Register

Strategic Managers Checklist

Partnership Lifecycle Guidance

B7. 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

Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users

B8. Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.

B9. Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement

B10. Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs

B11. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account

B12. Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity

B13. Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and service users

[Health and Wellbeing Board - Health and Wellbeing Board Constitution](#)

[Somerset Waste Partnership & SWP Business Plan](#)

What is in place to support this

We don't currently have a single communications strategy - it's made up of a number of policy and guidance documents hosted on the intranet.

VCSE Strategic Forum

[Joint strategic needs assessment](#)

All JSNA reports contain case studies and the outcome of consultation with specific population groups

Carers Forum – Adults – Carer's Voice

SEND forum

[UK Youth Parliament](#)

Children in Care Council, Leaving Care Council

[Youth Offending Team](#)

Consultation section of decision papers.

The role of the elected member and their responsibilities for 'full patch'

Procurement Soft-market testing

Consulting with all groups whether members of the public, equalities groups/networks or organised groups

Early Years and School Place Planning Infrastructure Growth Plan

[Joint strategic needs assessment](#)

JSNA 2015 includes findings from focus groups with young people in rural Somerset

[IMD \(update expected this summer 2019\)](#)

[Somerset Intelligence website](#)

JSNA 2017 process had service user engagement exercise

School population forecasts

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

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government’s responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority’s purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

Defining outcomes
C1. Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation’s purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the organisation’s overall strategy, planning and other decisions
C2. 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
C3. Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available
C4. Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes
C5. Managing service users expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available

What is in place to support this
Vision Statement
Strategic Planning - Links to County Vision & Business Plan
MTFP Cumulative Impact Assessments produced to support budget setting decisions.
Equality Impact Assessment published and Governance Board report to SLT
SLT Scorecards
Performance Report
CCP Exception Report
Financial Imperative Programme: Financial position and associated change control, escalations and risks escalated to SLT
Financial Reports
Strategic Risk Management Strategy
JCAD
Strategic Risk Management Group, regular review, updating and reporting of strategic risks to SLT and Audit Committee
MTFP financial tracker
Transformational and Financial Risks are both included in JCAD, the councils Risk management system. All risks regularly at least monthly.

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Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- C6. Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision
- C7. 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
- C8. 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
- C9. Ensuring fair access to services

SCC Business Plan
 Commissioning Intentions through commissioning / service plans
 Future Transport Plan
 Evidence through the Commissioning Gateway
 Co-production Guidance

MTFP Priorities

Call Centre stats/ complaints handling

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What is in place to support this

- Somerset Waste Board decisions on Recycle More and alternatives to landfill projects
- Capital programme
- One Public Estate programme requires consideration of options for shared use and efficiency savings across the public estate.
- Economic Development Projects (SEIC , innovation centres)
- Value for Money Strategy
- Constitution sets decision making requirements
- Officer reports and decision making templates and guidance
- Discussion in Cabinet / SLT meetings and pre-agenda meetings with chairs and vice-chairs.
- Minutes and decision records record decisions and reasons.

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

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

Determining interventions

D1. Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided

D2. 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

What is in place to support this

Constitution sets decision making requirements

Officer reports and decision making templates and guidance

Discussion in Cabinet / SLT meetings and pre-agenda meetings with chairs and vice-chairs.

Minutes and decision records record decisions and reasons.

Stakeholders feedback

MTFP

Capital

Planning interventions

D3. Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets

D4. Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered

D5. Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks

What is in place to support this

Service Plans

Business Plan

Forwards Plans

FIT Programme Governance Timetable and SLT Forward Plan

Somerset VCSE Strategic Coordination Initiative

Strategic Risk Management Strategy

JCAD

Strategic Risk Management Group, regular review, updating and reporting of strategic risks to SLT and Audit Committee

Business Continuity Plans

D6. Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances

D7. Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured

D8. Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly

D9. Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan

D10. Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

D11. Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints

Performance Report

Scorecards

Extensive range of on-line real-time reports for key operational services.

Detailed performance reports presented monthly to management teams and range of other boards/meeting.

Monthly and quarterly corporate monitoring process.

Supplemented by Annual data reports and specific deep-dive exercises or ad-hoc reports as required.

SLT reporting, tracking and follow through of escalations and

Change Control Process

Programme Business Case Process, including cost model

Linkages across plans

What is in place to support this

Business Plan

Social Value in commissioning intentions.

Social Value Guidance and Training

Service / Commissioning Plans

Commissioning Gateway

D12. Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term

D13. 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

D14. Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 states that this is "the additional benefit to the

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

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

Developing the entity's capacity

- E1. Reviewing operations, performance use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness
- E2. Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently
- E3. Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved
- E4. Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources

What is in place to support this

- [The TAMP 2010 and Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy \(HIAMS\).](#)
- DfT Local Highways Infrastructure Incentive Fund Self-Highways Commissioning Intentions document, linked to our Service Level Agreement between Highways and Transport Commissioning, and E&CI Operations.
- County Wide asset rationalisation programme using Place Based Review approach. Establishment of Corporate Landlord Model steering group in advance of implementation April 2019. Individual workstreams focus on challenges and solutions.
- 6 monthly occupancy studies of our Smart office bases and drop-ins
- Regular review of children's centres and GetSet operations/strategic objectives
- Community Library Partnerships
- Monthly Education Infrastructure Board to ensure sufficiency of education places
- Project team meetings
- Project monitoring dashboard
- Monthly corporate property project progress meeting
- Attendance at monthly infrastructure and programme boards
- Benchmarking Groups (Corporate and Service)
- Children's Services Benchmarking Group
- [Waste](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Board](#)

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Somerset Intelligence Partnership
Key Partners Register
Partnership Lifecycle Guidance
Our People Strategy
Service Plan
Establishment Control & Workforce Analytics
Workforce Planning Toolkit.
Service Areas responsible for generating own workforce plans with HR and OD providing support materials.

Developing the capability of the entity’s leadership and other individuals

E5. 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

E6. Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body

E7. Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads the authority 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

E8. Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared 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 – 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

What is in place to support this

Constitution includes Member / Officer Protocol and role

Regular Cabinet / SLT meetings

Officer Job Descriptions

Constitution includes high level Council and Cabinet Scheme of Delegation

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations - reviewed at least annually by Full Council and in the interim by Constitution Committee

Constitution sets out legal roles of Leader and CEO and relationship management in the Member / Officer Protocol

Member induction programme following election

Annual member training programme

Personal Development Plans for members

Cross party Member Development Panel has oversight role of member training and support

Officer Training

Development of widely accessible learning and information

Full records of all officer corporate central training available.

Workforce planning identifies succession planning matters

Constitution sets out the public rights to engage

Including access to reports, agendas, minutes, meetings, public question time provisions at formal meetings.

No provision for reviewing individual member performance.

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

E9. Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation

E10. Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections

E11. Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs

E12. 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

Peer review / service inspection reports are formally considered and acted upon as appropriate, e.g. establishment of a further scrutiny committee for children's services on the back of OFSTED inspection outcome.

SLT 1-2-1's with Chief Executive

Coaching opportunities

Generate a picture and record of learning needs and requisite training and action taken

Health and Wellbeing Champions

Mental Health First Aiders

Mindfulness

Carefirst & EAP

Rapid Access to Physio

Occupational Health

New Workforce Analytics / Dashboards

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

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

Managing risk
F1. Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making
F2. Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively
F3. Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated

What is in place to support this
Policy exists
Risk Management Strategy
SLT, Audit Committee and Strategic Risk Management Group
Core Council Programme Risk Management Strategy
JCAD

Managing performance
F4. Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review
F5. 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
F6. Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any

What is in place to support this
Service Plans Analysis
Performance Report (especially Appendix A1)
Performance Management Framework and Learning Centre
Constitution sets decision making requirements
Minutes and decision records record decisions and reasons.
Fortnightly position on Financial Imperative sent to Cabinet.
Quarterly update on Core Council Programmes and FIT to Cabinet
Bi monthly update on Financial Imperative to Cabinet/SLT.
Fortnightly reporting on Financial Position and progress on Organisational redesign to SLT.
Financial Imperative Team Lessons Learned Summary
Change Control Process

organisation for which it is responsible(OR, for a committee system)
 Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making

F7. Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement

F8. Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements)

Role of scrutiny / terms of reference detailed in the Constitution / reviewed at least annually.

Arrangements reviewed mid term and a further scrutiny committee for children's services established on the back of OFSTED inspection outcome to improve member capacity on scrutiny.

Agendas and minutes published

Members trained

Scorecards & deadlines

Performance Report & Timetable

Budget Reports

Budget Monitoring

Robust internal control

F9. Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the objectives

F10. Evaluating and monitoring the authority's risk management and internal control on a regular basis

F11. Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place

F12. Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor

F13. Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:– provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment – that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon

What is in place to support this

Risk Management Policy and Strategy in place

Strategic Risk Management Group

Regular strategic risk reports to SLT and Audit Committee

Risk reports part of the performance management reporting arrangements

[National Fraud Initiative](#)

[CIPFA - Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally](#)

South West Audit Partnership

Police

Healthy Organisation Report - Healthy Organisation looks at key areas within SCC governance, and will form a key source document in setting up the next Internal Audit Plan.

Annual internal audit plan and annual internal audit opinion

Audit Committee in place under the Constitution and meeting regularly in accordance with best practice.

Terms of reference set out in the Constitution and regular training provided to members.

Managing data

F14. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data

F15. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies

F16. Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring

What is in place to support this

The Information Governance Board

The Information Governance Manager

Framework of Information Governance Policy

The NHS toolkit has been completed and submitted electronically
Staff receive induction and refresher training.

Sharing Protocols

Sharing Agreements

Contracts include relevant data protection, confidentiality and FOI

Regular audit procedures against data to ensure accuracy

Validation procedures to ensure data quality

Rectify data quality issues. - Data Strategy

Strong public financial management

F17. Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance

F18. Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls

What is in place to support this

Resilience Report

Grant Thornton Reports

SLT business report

Finance reports to Audit Committee

Budget Monitoring reports

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

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

Implementing good practice in transparency

- G1. Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate
- G2. 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

What is in place to support this

- Published Data our Somerset annual report
- Agreements with Governance Board around level of publication and frequency

Implementing good practices in reporting

- G3. Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources
- G4. Ensuring members and senior management own the results

What is in place to support this

- You Said, We Did
- Leader's Report
- Financial Statements Narrative Report
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account
- Accountability in Service Plans and Scorecards
- Annual Governance Statement Action Plan
- Working jointly in Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures

G5. Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (annual governance statement)

G6. Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate

G7. Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations

Assurance and effective accountability

G8. Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon

G9. Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon

G10. Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations

G11. Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement

G12. Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met

Performance Reports & SLT Business Meeting Agenda

What is in place to support this

Internal Audit Charter and review of SWAP in light of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
Process for Audit Committee dealing with Partial assurance audits and use of JCAD to track.

Regular agenda items to Audit Committee (quarterly) entitled Internal Audit update. Audits with partial opinions are also reviewed at Audit Committee with managers to provide an update on recommendations.

[Ofsted](#)

Peer Review

Children's Quality and Performance Review Meeting

Adults and Health Performance Improvement Meetings

Risk Register

Partnership Protocols

SECTION 4: HOW CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IS REVIEWED

1. The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive are required to ensure that each year, a review is undertaken to measure the extent to which the Council as a whole has met the requirements of this Code as part of the providing assurance for the Annual Governance Statement.
2. The review is undertaken by the Governance Board and reported to the Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.
3. Where the review reveals possible gaps or weaknesses, action is agreed to ensure effective governance in future. Agreed action is monitored for implementation.
4. Where necessary, this Code will be amended as a result of the annual review, changes in best practice or statutory changes. Minor amendments to wording, titles and to details of 'what is in place' to support the principles may be approved by the Director of Finance and Monitoring Officer but any substantive changes to the Code and the principles will require Senior Leadership Team endorsement.
5. This code will be renewed no later than 31 March 2022.

Purpose: 'To ensure that Somerset and its people are supported and enabled to fulfil their potential, prosper and achieve a high standard of well-being'

Sources of Assurance

- Planning principles for services and Somerset Way of Working
- Constitution
- Strategic Leadership and Senior Management structures
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Financial Regs and Procedure Rules
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Commissioning Plans and, Procurement Strategy
- Consultation Strategy
- Communications Plans
- Equality Plan
- Organisational Development and Workforce policies and plans
- Corporate Performance
- Information Management policies
- ICT & Digital Strategy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Partnership Working
- Internal & External Audit and inspection
- Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy & Procedures
- Audit and Constitution & Standards committees
- Codes of Conduct (Employees and Members)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Performance Review and Development
- Complaints system

Assurances Received

- Statement of Accounts
- 'Focused on Our Performance' self-evaluation of progress against Council Plan
- External Audit and Inspection reporting
- Internal Audit reporting
- Risk and Control Registers and Risk Management Reporting
- Directors' Internal Control Assurances
- Anti Fraud and Corruption Annual Report
- Scrutiny Reviews
- Reviews commissioned by management
- Annual review of the Constitution, Contract Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- Peer Reviews
- Ongoing review by Governance Board of Corporate Governance and of gaps in assurance
- Governance Code and Framework review

Opportunities for Improvement

- Health & Safety
- Sustaining robust ICT infrastructure

Assurance Required on:

- Delivery of Council Plan
- Communication of performance
- Financial management
- Service quality and best use of resources
- Any failures in service delivery addressed effectively
- Councillors and Officers working together effectively
- Compliance with laws and regulations, policies and procedures
- High standards of conduct and behaviour
- Informed and transparent decision making
- Management of risk and effective internal controls
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and employees
- Democratic engagement and robust public accountability

Governance Review & Assurance

Annual Governance Statement

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE (THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES)

These apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- the civil service
- **local government**
- the police
- the courts and probation services
- non-departmental public bodies
- **health, education, social and care services.**

From: Committee on Standards in Public Life
Published: 31 May 1995

For more details, see:

[The 7 principles of public life - GOV.UK](#)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.