

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTIONS

Local Code ref	Local Code Measures	Current Score 4 high 0 low	Resp	Deadline	Date Impl	Progress Comment
Existing Actions (references updated to revised Local Code)						
A6	Use the Council's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Council;		Monitoirng Officer	31/03/2021	Part Complete and further reports will be produced in 2021/2022	The Review of Local Government Ethical Standards was reported to the Standards Committee in April 2019. The Best practice recommendations have been considered and reported back to the Standards Committee in April 2021. This was at the same time that the Revised Member Code of Conduct was considered. We await further guidance and Legislation from the Government relating to some of the Best Practice recommendations. Council agreed the new code of conduct for councillors in June 2021 and training is being delivered to all members on the 14 th September 2021.
B9, B10	Overall, several Local Code provisions to ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate.		Operational Lead Support Services; Performance, Innovation and Commissioning Specialist	CC commenced due to continue over next 12 months.	In progress	Information governance, data quality and transparency will all feature as part of the Customer Connect Programme, particularly the implementation of the new digital platform. In addition, the new platform will also enhance communication with customers, ensure that it is easier to access services and gather feedback. Update: MyAccount launched May 2021: this formed an essential element of managing Covid-19 grant schemes. Implementation of development management system continuing. Full staff transition to new systems and processes delayed by Covid-19 and diverson of resources.
D14	Link service plans to agreed measures and targets within the Council plan (incuding Social Value)		Strategy Lead Specialist; Performance,	31/10/2021	In progress	Embedding of procurement practices into service planning (eg identifying contracts in plans) along with

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	Set out clear financial and contract procedure rules, kept under review as part of the overall Constitution of the Council.		Innovation and Commissioning Specialist; Finance Lead Specialist			wider consideration of social value around delivery options. Update: A Commissioning Framework and revised Procurement Strategy are being prepared which will incorporate social value alongside other relevant policies such as climate change and biodiversity.
E3	Ensuring appropriate financial skills of Officers scored 3 out of 4 with some scope to make financial acumen requirements more explicit.		Finance Lead Specialist / Human Resources Lead Specialist	CC commenced due to continue over next 12 months	In progress	This is a medium term strategic project which also links in to Customer Connect.
New Actions						
Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law						
-	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: individual sign-off with regard to compliance with code		All Managers	31/3/2022	In progress	New annual appraisal process - 'Your Conversation' - being launched in 2021. This is supported by monthly 121 meetings between line managers and team members. Values are confirmed, and Behaviours workshops are planned for 2021 which will most probably lead to an update on the Personal Qualities Framework
A10	Put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and to monitor their continuing compliance in practice;	3	Monitoring Officer	31/3/2022	In progress	Engagement with all Services on the Constitution and any required changes. Establishment of Constitutional Working Group with Party Leaders (first meeting took place 07/06/2021). Training Programme 2021/22 on Legal, Governance and Democracy for all staff. 2 sessions already delivered.
		3	Monitoring Officer	31/03/2022	Ongoing	MO underpins personal behaviour with ethical values in relation to Code of Conduct Complaints against Members, established Standards Committee, following

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						<p>procedure and assessing complaints with Independent Person.</p> <p>Also advising fairly in relation to declarations of interest for both members and officers.</p> <p>Annual Review completed</p> <p>Meetings arranged with the Independent Person as required.</p> <p>Appointment and meetings with Independent Person</p>
		3	Human Resources Lead Specialist			Planned programme of HR policy reviews currently underway - around 1/3rd completed: more policy updates to HR Committee in July 2021
A12	Put in place arrangements so that conflicts of interest on behalf of members and employees can be avoided and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice		Monitoring Officer	31/03/2022	Ongoing	<p>Regular training is provided on declaration of interest requirements for new members with refresher training for all members.</p> <p>Declaration advice provided at all meetings with dispensations in place as required and requested.</p> <p>Work this year to improve the related party disclosures linked to transparency of member support grants and other interests.</p> <p>Work required relating to raising the profile and awareness regarding officer declarations of interest, relaunch planned. Plus raising awareness regarding process. Form updated this year.</p>

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A14	Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on the Council by the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise the Council's powers to the full benefit of our communities;	3	Monitoring Officer / All Managers	31/03/2021	Ongoing	Monitoring Officer reports quarterly to the Corporate Management Team on significant legal issues and cases of significance. With all case work we advise on vires (intra and ultra) doctrine and the MO ensures the Council acts within the vires doctrine. Quarterly reports continue, daily advice and input on case work and legal advice provided on reports to meetings and decision making.
A15	Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon the Council as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular integrate the key principles of administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice into the Council's procedures and decision making;	3	All Managers	31/03/2021	Ongoing	Legal officers advise officers on points of law and through continued development and training. The MO and Legal Officers not only apply these principles within their department but across the Council and when advising Members
A16	Put in place effective systems to protect the rights of staff. Ensure that policies for whistle blowing which are accessible to staff and those contracting with the authority, and arrangements for the support of whistle blowers, are in place	3	Human Resources Manager / Section 151 Officer	31/3/2022		Whistleblowing policy last reviewed 2017/18: review was due in 2019/20 but has been delayed due to pressures of Customer Connect and Covid-19
A18	use a statement of business conduct to make its expectations clear to partners and external providers of services;	2	Section 151 Officer/Strategy Lead Specialist	31/3/2022		Although there is a Partnership Register, there appears to be no current policy to accompany To do: Development of External Arrangement Policy/Strategy/ Guidance
A19	Induction for new members and staff on standard of behaviour expected	3	HR Lead Specialist	31/3/2022	In progress	Aim: provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis. Induction process in place, with development opportunities boosted by recent provision of e-learning.

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						Also, new Member Development Strategy currently going through approval process.
A20	Assess the skills required by members and officers and make arrangements to agree a development plan to develop those skills and address any training gaps, to enable roles to be carried out effectively;	3	All managers	31/10/2021		'new appraisal' approach, skills gap conversations, and Customer Connect Transition programme are underway
A22	ensure that professional advice on legal and financial matters is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately when decisions have significant legal or financial implications.	2	Monitoring Officer	31/03/2022	Ongoing	Report includes sections for professional advice on legal, financial, HR and other areas. Reports circulated to relevant officers, dates of advice recorded in report, all reports (except planning committee) considered and approved by Corporate Management Team before cleared for publication. However, current legal case management system needs addressing. Urgent need for adequate legal case management system. Meetings of Statutory Officers in place
Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement						
B1	Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles;	3	Strategy Lead Specialist	31/03/2022		Protocol exists, but no indication of when last reviewed
B3	Ensure that the Council's vision, values, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated;	3	Strategy Lead Specialist	31/3/2022		Unsure when this was last reviewed: review by March 2022

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B4	In pursuing partnerships, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged in line with and having referred to the Partnership Register and Guidance.	2	Strategy Lead Specialist	31/3/2022		A Partnership Register exists but responsibility shifts means that it needs a review. Also policy behind it need reinstating
B5	Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based;	3	All Managers			Building of relationships with portfolio holders. Examples SAMP board, Climate Change Action Group. Actions may be dependent on the area of work
B13	To ensure committee decisions are fully documented through the use of appropriate report templates, agenda submission processes and minutes;	2	All Managers	31/10/2021		Further training and further communication of what is required. Council wide engagement needed.
B16	Ensure that professional advice on legal and financial matters is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately when decisions have significant legal or financial implications;	3	Monitoring Officer	31/03/2022	Ongoing	Specific facility within all reports to Council members that log the advice sought from legal and finance. More training required and further communication of how and when advice from legal and finance advice should be sought.
B17	When working in partnership, ensure that there is a clear statement setting out the purpose of the partnership and the outputs to be achieved.	3	All managers	31/03/2022		Some work to ensure that this is included in the policy for partnership working
Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits						
C7	Link service plans to agreed measures and targets within the Council plan;	3	All managers	31/10/2021		Out of date and being replaced by "Plan on a Page"
C11	Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job;	3	All managers	31/10/2021		Although Protocols are in place, they are not always applied

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Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes						
D1	Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and ensure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available;	3	All managers	31/10/2021		Service Plans being replaced by "Plan to Page"
D13	Partnership Framework: Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job	3	All managers	31/10/2021		Specific evidence pertaining to Partnerships difficult to find
Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it						
E2	assess the skills required by members and officers and make arrangements to agree a development plan to develop those skills and address any training gaps, to enable roles to be carried out effectively;	3	Human Resources Lead Specialist	30/11/2022		Leadership Team development programme with external provider will conclude in summer 2021. Team Leader programme will start in autumn 2021. Behavioural workshops will help employees define behaviours that help us meet this need. New Member Development Strategy will support Employee workshops in 2021, plus training opportunities to support member development
E5	Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed, in line with the member development strategy;	3	Human Resources Lead Specialist	31/12/2021		Induction process in place, with development opportunities boosted by recent provision of e-learning. Also, new Member Development Strategy currently going through approval process Your Conversation launch May 2021. Values and Behaviours workshops planned for later in 2021. Plan to review induction/onboarding in 2021

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E8	Consider career structures for members and officers to encourage participation and development	2	Chief Executive / All managers	31/03/2022		
E9	manage the strategic Human Resource Management and Organisational Development needs of the organisation through relevant policies and accreditation.	3	Human Resources Lead Specialist	31/10/2021		Plan on a Page development ongoing
E14	develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles;	3	Chief Executive	30/06/2022		Discussion between Chief Executive and Leader
E15	develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive negotiate their respective roles early in their relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained;	3	Monitoring Officer	31/03/2022	Ongoing	Keeping this under review, Cabinet away days with Leadership Team and clarification of Council Priorities and roles and responsibilities relating to them.
E16	determine a scheme of delegated and reserved powers within the constitution and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required	3	Monitoring Officer	31/03/2022	Ongoing	Work is ongoing with all services to ensure that the Constitution is clear regarding delegations and decision making. The Constitution is now treated as a living document which is reviewed regularly and updated. Previously this has been on an annual basis. Approx 6 reports over the past year have amended the Constitution and the Council has introduced emergency decision making to deal with COVID-19. The MO will be bringing forward a programme of work for the year to come.

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E17	Ensure effective internal control arrangements exist for sound financial management systems and processes;	3	Seection 151 Officer	30/06/2022		Second update report to be presented to the Leadership Team on the amends to contracts and Contract Procedure Rules by June 2021. Further update on the programme of work to update individual service delegations and decision making will be programmed in over the next 12 months. All to proceed through the Constitutional Working Group.
E18	Establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively;	2	Strategy Lead Specialist	31/03/2022		More work required on the Strategy behind Partnership working
Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management						
F17	ensure performance, financial and non-financial, is reported to senior management and Members including action plans where necessary;	2	All managers	31/10/2021		Performance map showing all key activities have performance measures: consider as part of Plan on a Page process
F18	To ensure committee decisions are fully documented through the use of appropriate report templates, agenda submission processes and minutes;	3	All managers	31/10/2021		Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports that are adhered to Deadlins frequently missed or insufficient time allowed for preparation of comments. Training to be provided to ensure timely receipt of requests for support and advice.
F20	develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall;	3	Monitoring Officer	31/03/2021	Ongoing	Training to be provided at least annually for members Access to North West Employers in place training and support Evidence of effective scrutiny in the Annual Report 2020/2021
Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability						

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G9	ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and staff and make a commitment to openness and transparency in all our dealings, including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so;	2	Chief Executive	31/3/2022		Not explicitly a community strategy but sets out arrangements for accountability in partnerships. Review by March 2022.

CIPFA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE ACTIONS

Fm Code Ref	FM Code measure	Current Status Yes /No	Resp	Deadline	Date Impl	Progress Comment
A: The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the authority provide value for money						
A2	High-level governance and management arrangements exist: Effective service and financial planning	N	All managers	30/09/2021		Plan on a Page development ongoing
A4	Reviewing explicitly the ways in which these services are delivered or by comparing the authority's own services and service performance with those of other authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency reviews • Benchmarking • Peer Review 	N	Section 151 Officer	31/03/2022		Linked to Plan on a Page development: need to ensure full coverage of reviews and benchmarking.

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A5	Ways in which the authority could help to ensure that its services are effective, in that they are achieving the authority's objectives and meeting the needs of service users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of Performance Data • Service Reviews • User Surveys • External assessments 	N	All managers Section 151 Officer	31/03/2022 31/07/2022		Plan on a Page development ongoing: link to monitoring required Value for money policy to be prepared alongside Procurement Strategy update and Medium Term Financial Plan refresh.
L: The authority has engaged with key stakeholders in developing its long term financial strategy, medium term financial plan and annual budget.						
L	The authority has engaged with key stakeholders in developing its long term financial strategy, medium term financial plan and annual budget.	N	Section 151 Officer	28/02/2022		Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited to comment on draft MTFP and budget proposals. Statutory business rate consultation carried out as part of budget setting process. Public consultation methodology to be developed for 2021/22 budget setting process
M: The authority uses a documented option appraisal methodology to demonstrate the VFM of its decisions						
M1	Option appraisal IFAC/PAIB Project and Investment Appraisal for Sustainable Value Creation: Principles in Project and Investment Appraisal	N	Section 151 Officer	31/12/2021		A high-level bid is required for all capital schemes, a full business case is requested prior to commencement of capital works but the format is not mandated. A business case format will be prepared to include the rationale for the project, capital and revenue costs, payback period (if applicable) and project risks. Procurement Strategy to be approved in All tenders consider VFM by considering the quality of service, not just the price.
M3	The accounting treatment of material decisions is considered and demonstrated as part of the formal option appraisal process.	N				
N: The leadership team takes action using reports enabling it to identify and correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability						
N2	All Financial monitoring reports include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accruals based financial information •Service performance information 	N	Chief Finance Officer			Purchase ordering system produces accruals based purchase information, payroll and income is on cash basis.

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N6	There are appropriate arrangements in place for reporting and managing the financial performance of each of the organisation's delivery partnerships and collaborative arrangements.	N	All managers	31/3/2022		Some monitoring through contract processes, not fully consolidated into main finance monitoring processes
N7	There are appropriate arrangements in place for the project management and cost control of capital projects.	N	All managers	31/3/2022		While there is budget monitoring there has been a very significant level of re-profiling of capital programme which suggests further work is necessary
O: The leadership team monitors the elements of its balance sheet which pose a significant risk to its financial stability						
O2	Management accounts include either a full balance sheet or an appropriate level of balance sheet information to meet business needs and evidence of monitoring of material items	N	Section 151 Officer	31/03/2022		Internal monitoring only includes certain balance sheet items, mainly around debt. Full review of balance sheet monitoring to be completed by March 2022