

Great Aycliffe Town Council

Local Code of Governance



September 2015

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
2.0 What is Governance?	3
3.0 The Core Principles of Good Governance	4
4.0 Applying the Core Principles of Good Governance.....	4
5.0 Principle 1	5
6.0 Principle 2	7
7.0 Principle 3	10
8.0 Principle 4	12
9.0 Principle 5	15
10.0 Principle 6	17
11.0 Review and Reporting of Governance	19

Introduction

- 1.0 This Local Code of Governance has been prepared in accordance with the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework' and supporting guidance, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society for Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in 2007.
- 1.1 The Council, as a 'larger body' under the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, is required to comply with the requirements of this framework.
- 1.2 The Framework requires the Council to:-
 - Review existing governance arrangements against the requirements of the Framework;
 - Develop and maintain an up to date Local Code of Governance, including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness;
 - Prepare an Annual Governance Statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which the Council complies with the code and how it has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements during the year.
- 1.3 This Local Code of Governance describes how Great Aycliffe Town Council will discharge its responsibilities in respect of maintaining an effective system of governance, including the arrangements for reviewing its effectiveness on an annual basis, and preparing an Annual Governance Statement to report publicly on the extent to which the Council has complied with this Code.
- 1.4 The adoption and annual review of this Code will help the Council to achieve Strategic Aims 1 and 2 from the Service Delivery Plan:-

"To provide good quality governance and management of the Council"

"To manage the Council's finances and assets in a responsible manner."
- 1.6 The corporate management team, comprising the Town Clerk, Finance Manager and Corporate and Policy Officer have reviewed the Council's governance arrangements against the Framework and developed this Local Code of Governance.

2.0 What is Governance?

- 2.1 Governance is defined as how local authorities ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner.
- 2.2 Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes for citizens and service users.
- 2.3 The governance framework comprises all of the cultures, values, strategies, policies, systems and processes, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its community.
- 2.4 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with law and proper standards, as applicable to the parish and town council sector, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.
- 2.5 The Council is also required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to value for money, via a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 2.6 In discharging this responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, to facilitate the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and ensuring a sound system of internal control.

3.0 The Core Principles of Good Governance

3.1 The CIPFA / SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework sets out six core principles of good corporate governance, and each of these is underpinned by supporting principles and requirements.

3.2 The six core principles are as follows:-

1. Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behavior.
4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
5. Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.
6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

3.2 The Council fully supports these principles. This Local Code of Governance is a public statement of its commitment to these principles and sets out clearly the way in which the Council will meet that commitment.

3.3 It ensures that these principles are fully integrated into the conduct of the Council's business, as well as establishing a means of demonstrating compliance and setting out the arrangements for reviewing their effectiveness on an annual basis.

4.0 Applying the Core Principles of Good Governance

4.1 The main body of the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework is divided into six sections; each of which covers one of the core principles set out above, together with a set of supporting principles, which in turn have a range of specific requirements.

4.2 The following section of the Council's Local Code of Governance sets out the means by which the Council will demonstrate its commitment to good governance in relation to each of the six core principles.

5.0 Principle 1

Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

The Council is committed to focusing on its purpose and implementing a vision for the Parish setting out how it will achieve its intended outcomes for the community.

This was historically achieved through the Parish Planning process and the annual development of the Parish Performance Plan, and has since been incorporated within the development and implementation of the new Council Service Delivery Plan with effect from the 2015/16 financial year.

Within this core principle there are three supporting principles, which are set out below, along with the Council's commitment in relation to each:-

5.1 Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Council's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users.

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Develop and promote the Council's purpose and vision;
- Review on a regular basis the Council's vision for the local area and its implications for the Council's governance arrangements;
- Ensure any partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners; and
- Publish an annual report on a timely basis, to communicate the Council's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved mainly via the Council's strategic planning process, incorporating the annual Service Delivery Plan and individual service plans, the Medium Term Financial Plan and other financial documents and reports, the Annual Report, the Performance Management Framework, and the various customer involvement arrangements including the Customer Panel and Youth Council.

5.2 Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning.

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available;
- Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved by regularly monitoring of strategic aims and targets via the Service Delivery Plan Action Plan, regularly monitoring performance and service standards via the Performance Management Framework and the work of the Council's Review Sub Committee, undertaking regular service reviews via the Council's Service Review Working Group and implementing the requirements of the Council's approved Business Continuity Plan.

5.3 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the Council has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively; and
- Measure the environmental impact of all policies, plans and decisions.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved by producing a robust and transparent Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue and Capital Budget each year, regularly monitoring expenditure and income via effective budgetary control, striving to deliver year on year efficiency savings, and the achieving an unqualified opinion on the Value for Money Conclusion from the Council's external auditors.

The financial and environmental impact relating to any policies, plans or decisions reported to the Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees are specifically included in all reports requiring a decision or the approval of a plan or policy.

6.0 Principle 2

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

The Council is committed to good member and officer relations and the constitution incorporates a clearly defined committee and organisational structure, with specific powers, duties, functions and roles clearly identified, documented and communicated.

Within this core principle there are three supporting principles, which are set out below, along with the Council's commitment in relation to each:-

6.1 Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually, and the Council's approach to putting this into practice;
- Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other Council Members, members generally and of senior officers;

How this will be achieved:-

It should be noted that Town Councils are not required to have an executive and non-executive function or scrutiny function in the same way as principal councils. Great Aycliffe Town Council meets and takes decisions as a full council but is supported by a number of committees and sub-committees with specific responsibilities and functions.

Scrutiny is achieved via the review by Full Council of all decisions taken by committees and sub-committees, and the operation of an Audit Sub Committee, Service Review Working Group and Review Sub Committee.

The above requirements, as far as they are applicable to the Council will be achieved through the maintenance of the Council's Constitution which incorporates the Committee Structure and the Powers and Duties of Committees, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement, Standing Orders relating to the Proceedings and Business of the Council, Scheme of Delegation, Members' and Officers' Codes of Conduct and Member and Officer Relations Protocol, and all Council strategies and policies.

The Council will also maintain up to date job descriptions and person specifications for all officers clearly setting out roles and responsibilities.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved of the collective decision of the Council, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required;
- 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;
- Make a senior officer (the Section 151 Officer) responsible to the Council for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and maintaining an effective system of internal control;
- Make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the Council for all aspects of operational management; and
- Make a senior officer responsible to the Council for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.

How this will be achieved:-

Please note that the reference to the leader and chief executive above refers to the structure operated by principal councils as set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and is not relevant to town and parish councils.

Compliance with the above principles, as far as they are relevant to the council, will be achieved through the maintenance of the Council's Constitution, Members and Officers Codes of Conduct, and Member and Officer Relations Protocol, as well as up to date contracts of employment, and job descriptions and person specifications for all officers clearly setting out roles and responsibilities.

The Finance Manager acts as the Council's statutory Section 151 Officer and is responsible for the effective financial management of the Council.

The Town Clerk is ultimately responsible for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with, while service managers are responsible for the operational management of their individual service areas.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between Members and Officers in their respective roles;
- Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable);
- Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery;
- Ensure that the Council's vision, 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;
- When working in partnership, ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the Council; and
- When working in partnership ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership, and that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners, the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved via the Council Constitution, Member and Officer Relations Protocol, contracts of employment, job descriptions and person specifications for all officers clearly setting out roles and responsibilities, the Members' Allowances Scheme and Officers Allowances Policy, the Performance Management Framework and Council Service Delivery Plan, and various customer involvement arrangements including the Customer Panel and Youth Council.

The Council is involved in limited partnership arrangements and in all cases roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and representatives understand that they cannot take decisions on behalf of the Council as a whole.

7.0 Principle 3

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

The Council is committed to demonstrating good governance through the highest levels of conduct and behaviour from its Members and Officers.

Within this core principle there are two supporting principles, which are set out below, along with the Council's commitment in relation to each:-

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Ensure that the Council's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect;
- Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the Council, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols; and
- Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the Council are not influenced by prejudice, bias, or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders, and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved through the maintenance of the Council's Constitution and in particular the Financial Regulations, Members' and Officers' Codes of Conduct, Member and Officer Relations Protocol, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, Confidential Reporting Policy, and Comments and Complaints procedures.

All members and senior officers are required to make annual declarations of interests.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the Council and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners;
- Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are developed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor the continuing effectiveness in practice;
- Develop and maintain an effective standards committee;
- 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; and
- In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behavior both individually and collectively.

How this will be achieved:-

Organisational values will be developed and put into practice via the Council's strategic planning process, incorporating the annual Service Delivery Plan and individual service plans, and the implementation of the Performance Management Framework.

These are communicated via the agendas and minutes of all meetings of the Council and its Committees, the Council website, quarterly newsletters and the local press.

Ethical standards expected of Council members and officers are set out in the Council's Constitution and in particular the Financial Regulations, Members' and Officers' Codes of Conduct, the Member and Officer Relations Protocol, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Confidential Reporting Policy.

It should be noted that Town Councils are not required to have a standards committee in the same way as principal councils.

8.0 Principle 4

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

The Council is committed towards ensuring the effective scrutiny of all policies and decisions in order to ensure that informed and transparent decisions are made by the Council at all times.

The Council is also committed to making effective arrangements for the management of risk in the exercise of its functions and delivery of public services.

Within this core principle there are four supporting principles, which are set out below, along with the Council's commitment in relation to each:-

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function, which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Council's performance overall and that of any organization for which it is responsible;
- Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which the decisions are based;
- Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure they continue to operate in practice;
- Develop and maintain an effective audit committee, which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions; and
- Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.

How this will be achieved:-

It should be noted that Town Councils are not required to have a specific scrutiny function in the same way as principal councils.

Great Aycliffe Town Council meets and takes decisions as a full council but is supported by a number of committees and sub-committees with specific responsibilities and functions.

Scrutiny is achieved via the review by Full Council of all decisions taken by committees and sub-committees, and the operation of an Audit Sub Committee, Service Review Working Group and Review Sub Committee.

All decisions taken by the Council or one of its committees or sub committees are properly recorded and documented via the agendas and minutes of the meeting including details of the criteria, rationale and considerations on which the decisions are based.

Arrangements are in place to safeguard members and officers against conflicts of interest and these are documented in the Members' and Officers' Codes of Conduct. All members and senior officers are required to make annual declarations of interests.

The Council operates an effective Audit Sub Committee which is independent of the Council and responsible for the review of the system of internal control.

Comments and Complaints and Freedom of Information policies are in place to deal with request for information and complaints from members of the public.

8.2 Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community needs.

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Ensure that those making decisions whether for the Council or a partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose, relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications; and
- Ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded in advance of decision making and used appropriately.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved through the Members' induction scheme and a comprehensive and ongoing Members' training scheme, and the inclusion of accurate, clear, relevant, timely information in all reports to the Council and its committees requiring a decision or approval of a policy, plan or strategy.

The Council also makes use of professional services and consultants on specific matters where specialist knowledge is required, such as legal advice, human resources issues, health and safety and information technology.

8.3 Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Council, with members and managers at all levels recognizing that risk management is part of their jobs; and
- Ensure that effective arrangements for whistle-blowing are in place to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the Council have access.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved through the maintenance and implementation of the Council's Financial Regulations, Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register, Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy and Confidential Reporting Policy.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities;
- Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law; and
- Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law (rationality, legality and natural justice) into their procedures and decision making processes.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved through the maintenance of the Council's Constitution and the Town Clerk's responsibility to the Council for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with

9.0 Principle 5

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

The Council is committed to putting in place training and development programmes to fill any identified skills gaps in relation to the capacity and capability of members and officers, and to ensure that professional knowledge is kept up to date.

Within this core principle there are three supporting principles, which are set out below, along with the Council's commitment in relation to each:-

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis; and
- Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved through the Member's induction process and employee induction and appraisal processes, and the development of members' and officers' training programmes.

The Council has in place an approved staffing structure and the Revenue Budget helps to ensure that all senior officers have the appropriate staffing support and resources to perform effectively in their roles.

The Members and Officer Relations includes detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of members and officers, while detailed job descriptions and person specifications are in place for all officers clearly setting out roles, responsibilities and required skills and knowledge.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Assess the skills required by Members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively;

- Develop skills on a continuing basis in order to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinize and challenge and to recognize when outside expert advice is needed; and
- Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the Council as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs.

How this will be achieved:-

Assessing and developing the skills of officers and members will be achieved through the Member's induction process and employee induction and appraisal processes and the subsequent development of members' and officers' training programmes.

The Performance Management Framework and work of the Review Sub Committee ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the Council as a whole, while the Service Delivery Plan sets out annual targets for members and officers.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Council; and
- Ensure that career structures are in place for officers to encourage participation and development.

How this will be achieved:-

The encouragement of engagement with the local community will be achieved through the Council's various customer involvement arrangements including surveys, open days, and working with the Customer Panel and Youth Council. Career structures are in place for officers where relevant and those officers are encouraged to undertake training to ensure personal development. The employee induction and appraisal processes and the development of training programmes ensure that future learning and development needs are identified.

The senior officer Performance Management Group meets on a regular basis and ensures that all managers are involved in decision making and kept to date with any new developments, while team meetings are held to ensure that all other staff are up to date and involved in relevant decisions.

10.0 Principle 6

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

The Council is committed to engaging and consulting with the local community and other stakeholders on key issues and encouraging participation and involvement in decision making to help ensure robust public accountability.

Within this core principle there are three supporting principles, which are set out below, along with the Council's commitment in relation to each:-

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what;
- Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required; and
- Produce an Annual Report on activity of the scrutiny function.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved mainly via the publication of the Council's annual Service Delivery Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan which clearly set out accountabilities with the various stakeholders of the Council.

The Council also publishes an Annual Report, although this does not report on the activity of the scrutiny function, as town and parish councils are not required to operate a scrutiny function in the same way as principal councils.

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

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will need to:-

- Ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively;

- Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality;
- Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the Council to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands;
- Establish a clear policy on the types of issues that the Council will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about, including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result;
- On an annual basis, publish a performance plan, giving information on the Council's visions, strategy, plans and financial statements, as well and information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period; and
- Ensure that the Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff, and ensure that it has made 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 to do so.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved via the Council's strategic planning process, incorporating the annual Service Delivery Plan and individual service plans, the Medium Term Financial Plan and other financial documents and reports, the Annual Report, the Performance Management Framework, and the various customer involvement arrangements including the Customer Panel and Youth Council.

The Council will also ensure that its meetings are advertised, open to the public, provide for public questions, and keep comprehensive records of decisions and meetings of the Council.

The Council also complies fully with the requirements of the Openness of Local Government Regulations and Local Government Transparency Code in terms of the publication of information on the Council website.

10.3 Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.

In order to meet this commitment, the Council will:-

- Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.

How this will be achieved:-

This will be achieved via the Council's commitment to the learning and development of its staff, undertaking staff appraisals, developing and maintaining

effective human resources policies, and putting in place processes to ensure, as far as possible, that staff are consulted and involved in the decision making of the Council via team meetings.

11.0 Review and Reporting of Governance

- 11.1 The Council is required, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations, to carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements and ensure compliance with the requirements of this Code.
- 11.2 The purpose of the review is to provide assurance that the Council's governance arrangements are operating effectively, and to identify any actions required to maintain or improve governance in the future.
- 11.3 The outcome of the annual review is reported in the Annual Governance Statement which the Council will receive and approve alongside the Annual Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement, will include an action plan to rectify any significant areas of weakness or identified improvements in corporate governance, and will be signed jointly by the Chairman of the Council and the Town Clerk.
- 11.4 As such the Annual Governance Statement will be prepared in accordance with the timetable for the production of the Statement of Accounts, which is prepared and approved by 30th June each year.
- 11.5 The corporate management team will be responsible for undertaking the review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and preparing the Annual Governance Statement for consideration and approval by the Council.
- 11.6 The Council's external auditors will undertake a review of the Council's Annual Governance Statement each year as part of their annual inspection of the Council. The external auditor's overall audit opinion is set out in their Audit Completion Report and Annual Audit Letter, and any concerns relating to governance would be highlighted in these documents and require action to be taken by the Council.