



STIRLING COUNCIL

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Revised edition, March 2018

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Document Version Control

All amendments and updates to the Local Code of Corporate Governance will be documented and recorded via the Change History listed below.

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Document Responsibility

Name	Title	Service
Iain Strachan	Chief Officer – Governance	Localities and Infrastructure

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1. Introduction

Stirling Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and is used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council conducts its business through a governance framework, which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes, to help support the achievement of organisational objectives and for the management of risk. The governance framework is set out in the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

This updated Local Code of Corporate Governance (the “Local Code”) has been developed in line with the principles and requirements of the “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition*” published by CIPFA & SOLACE, and sets out the Council’s commitment to meeting recognised principles and high standards of corporate governance, and to arrangements that underpin these, in practice, across the Council.

The Local Code summarises the governance arrangements and sources of assurance that make up the Council’s systems of governance, internal control and risk management. These take the form of corporate structures, systems, processes and documents, which collectively are the Council’s corporate governance structure and framework.

The environment within which the Council now operates is becoming increasingly complex, and legislation such as the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 have brought about new roles, opportunities and greater flexibility in service delivery, as well as challenges for the Council and its’ partners, which must be reflected in the Council’s governance framework and arrangements.

When working with other councils, public sector bodies, third sector or private sector providers, the Council must ensure that robust governance arrangements are established at the outset and are consistent with the principles and requirements of the “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework*”.

Robust governance enables the Council to pursue its vision and strategic objectives effectively, underpinned by mechanisms for the control and management of risk. Governance must be owned by all stakeholders, including Elected Members and senior management. It should remain embedded in the culture and be applied within a transparent framework of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.

As required by the CIPFA and SOLACE “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*” framework, we will regularly test our corporate governance structure and framework by:

- reviewing our existing governance arrangements against this revised Code;
- developing and maintaining an up-to-date Local Code of Corporate Governance, including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness; and
- reporting publicly in an Annual Governance Statement included in our published Annual Accounts on the extent to which we comply with the Local Code, how we have monitored the effectiveness of our governance arrangements during the year, and on any planned changes.

2. Purpose of the Council's Governance Framework

The "*International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector*" published in 2014 by CIPFA and IFAC, from which the "*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition*" is adapted, defines governance as:

"the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved".

The "*International Framework*" also states that:

"to deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entity's objectives while acting in the public interest at all times. Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders".

The broad purposes of the Council's governance framework, as described in the Local Code are, therefore, to enable the Council:

- to ensure it engages openly and comprehensively with stakeholders and partners;
- to achieve its organisational objectives, whilst acting in the public interest;
- to manage any risks to the achievement of those objectives; and
- to conduct its business in accordance with the law, ethical standards and with integrity

An effective governance framework for the Council will be demonstrated where the Council has arrangements in place, which are reviewed and updated as necessary, including:

- a documented commitment to openness and acting in the public interest, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, with internal policies and procedures, and ensuring that expenditure is lawful;
- a vision that is developed and properly communicated, which specifies intended outcomes for citizens and service users, and is used as a basis for planning;
- the vision is translated into courses of action for the Council, its partnerships and other stakeholders;
- clear protocols and channels of communication within the Council, with the local community, with partnerships and with other stakeholders, to ensure accountability and encourage open consultation;
- defined and documented roles and responsibilities of Elected Members, management and staff,
- induction and identification of the development needs of Elected Members and Senior Officers in relation to their strategic roles, which is supported by appropriate training;
- codes of conduct which define standards of behaviour for Elected Members and staff;
- policies dealing with whistleblowing and conflicts of interest and that these codes and policies are communicated effectively;
- an effective decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, partnership decision-making, information for decision-makers and robust data quality;

- performance measurement and reporting of services and related projects, ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with defined outcomes and represent the best use of resources and value for money;
- financial management arrangements that conform with the requirements of the “CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016)” and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact;
- assurance and internal audit arrangements conform with the requirements of the “CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010)” and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact;
- effective arrangements for the discharge of the Monitoring Officer function and the Head of Paid Service function;
- effective arrangements for identifying and managing risks, for performance and demonstrating clear accountability;
- effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements in accordance with the “CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (2014)”;
- a Committee to undertake the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in “CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2013)”;
- arrangements to ensure the Council provides timely support, information and responses to external auditors, and to properly consider audit findings and recommendations; and
- good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working and ensuring that they are reflected across the Council’s overall governance structures.

3. The Council’s Local Code of Corporate Governance

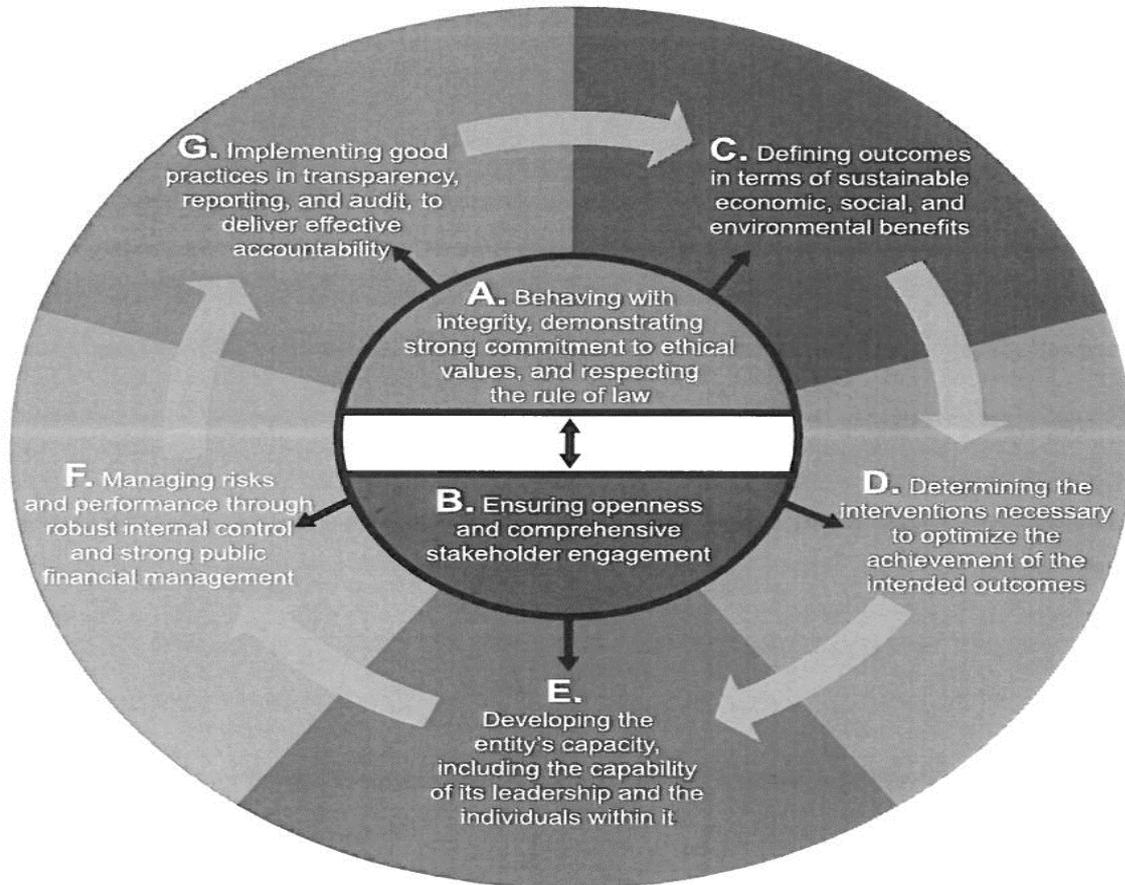
The Council has approved the Local Code, which is consistent with best practice governance principles for local authorities as set out in “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*” framework published in 2016 by CIPFA & SOLACE, as shown below. The CIPFA & SOLACE framework was itself adapted for local government from the “*International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector*” published in 2014 by CIPFA and IFAC.

The Local Code and the Council’s financial management and internal audit arrangements conform to the requirements of the 2016 CIPFA Statement on the “*Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government*” and the CIPFA Statement on the “*Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Sector Organisations*”. The governance arrangements that comply with the CIPFA Statements are clearly identified within each relevant governance principle contained within the Local Code.

The main aims of the Local Code of Corporate Governance are to:

- give an overview of the governance arrangements in operation within the Council;
- provide assurance that the Council’s business is run lawfully, accountably and openly; and
- provide the Council with a focus for self-assessment of its governance arrangements.

Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



The Local Code of Corporate Governance (the Local Code) will be subject to regular review to ensure it is kept up to date with the Council's structure, its strategic priorities and objectives and corporate governance arrangements. Where a review identifies that any significant change(s) to the Local Code are necessary, a revised Local Code will be submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration, comment and for referral to the Council for approval and adoption, before being implemented.

In line with the CIPFA and SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" framework, the Council will continue to:

- review its existing governance arrangements against this revised Code;
- develop and maintain an up-to-date Local Code of Corporate Governance, including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness; and
- report publicly in its Annual Governance Statement in the published Annual Accounts on the extent to which it complies with the Local Code, how it has been monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements during the year, and on any planned improvement actions.

4. Core Governance Principles and the Council’s Governance Arrangements

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also how it uses the resources under its stewardship, for its outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes it has achieved. It has an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential for the Council to demonstrate the appropriateness of all of its actions, and to have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.</p> <p>A.1 Behaving with integrity A.2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values A.3 Respecting the rule of law</p>
Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>The Council is established and run for the public good and should, therefore, ensure openness in all of its activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all stakeholders and groups, including individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.</p> <p>B.1 Openness B.2 Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders B.3 Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</p>
Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>The long-term nature and impact of many of the Council’s responsibilities mean that it should define and plan sustainable outcomes. Its’ decisions should further its 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.</p> <p>C.1 Defining outcomes C.2 Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>
Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>The Council achieves its intended outcomes through legal, regulatory, and practical courses of action, and determining the right mix is a critically important strategic choice for the Council. Robust decision-making mechanisms are needed to ensure that 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 achievement of outcomes is optimised.</p> <p>D.1 Determining interventions D.2 Planning interventions D.3 Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p>

Core Principle E: Developing the Council’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>The Council 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 its intended outcomes within the specified periods. It must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain there are policies in place to guarantee that management has the operational capacity for the Council as a whole. Individuals and the environment in which the Council operates will change over time, and there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity and the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in the Council is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.</p> <p>E.1 Developing the Council’s capacity E.2 Developing the capability of the Council’s leadership and other individuals</p>
Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>The Council needs to have implemented and 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 the performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.</p> <p>A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of Council policies and achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>F.1 Managing risk F.2 Managing performance F.3 Robust internal control F.4 Managing data F.5 Strong public financial management</p>
Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.	
Supporting Principles:	<p>Accountability within the Council 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 Council plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. External and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.</p> <p>G.1 Implementing good practices in transparency G.2 Implementing good practices in reporting G.3 Assurance and effective accountability</p>

Core Principle A:

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

Supporting Principle: Behaving with integrity (A.1)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure 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 Council;
2. ensure members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the Council organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the 7 Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles);
3. lead by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions; and
4. demonstrate, communicate and embed 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.

Supporting Principle: Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values (A.2)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. seek to establish, monitor and maintain its ethical standards and performance;
2. underpin personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Council's culture and operation;
3. develop and maintain robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values; and
4. ensure that external providers of services on behalf of the Council are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the Council.

Supporting Principle: Respecting the rule of law (A.3)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations;
2. create 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;
3. strive to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders;
4. deal with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively; and
5. ensure corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- The **Council's values** of 'openness and responsiveness', 'equality and fairness', 'trust and empowerment', 'dignity and respect', 'caring and supportive' and 'working in partnership', which underpin the way in which it will work to deliver its services to citizens and service users;
- The national **Councillors' Code of Conduct**, which sets out the standards Councillors must apply when undertaking their duties, including their conduct at meetings, relationships with Officers, remuneration & expenses, gifts & hospitality, confidentiality and registration & declaration of interests;
- **Induction and ongoing training opportunities for Elected Members** on their roles and responsibilities, and to support their ongoing development (e.g. Councillors' Code of Conduct), as delivered by appropriate Officers and training providers;
- **Council-wide induction for Officers** that ensures they possess skills and demonstrate behaviour consistent with the Council's culture, values, ethical and behavioural standards;
- The **Monitoring Officer** advisory role of the Chief Officer – Governance, to support Elected Members on the Councillors' Code of Conduct to enable them make decisions about actual or potential conflicts of interests and to make any necessary registrations or declarations required by the Councillors' Code of Conduct or the Council's Standing Orders;
- The **Council Standing Orders**, regulate proceedings and the conduct of Council business, in accordance with legal requirements, and provide for Elected Members to declare any conflict of interest (if necessary, under advice from the Chief Officer - Governance), determine the conduct of business following a declaration and require any such declaration to be minuted;
- The **Code of Conduct** for employees, which sets out the standards Officers must apply when undertaking their duties to personal conduct, relationships with Elected Members, colleagues and the public, gifts & hospitality, confidentiality of information and conflicts of interests;
- The **Performance Capability Procedures** and **Disciplinary Procedures** which provide process and guidance for both staff and management to support the achievement of appropriate role performance and behaviour(s), in line with the Code of Conduct;
- **Leadership and Management Development Programmes**, consistent with the 5-year Strategic Workforce Plan, continue to roll-out and underpin the development of corporate leadership and management, enabling leaders and managers to promote the Council's values and Codes of Conduct through their actions and behaviours;
- The **Personal Review & Development (PRD) Framework**, consistent with the 5-year Strategic Workforce Plan, continues to underpin a consistent, fair and transparent Council-wide process to support managers to create a climate of openness and support for employees that is consistent with the Council's culture and values and which supports appropriate personal development by employees;
- The Council's six **Shared Behaviours** integrated into the Personal Review and Development (PRD) process for Officers, and which are aligned to helping achieve the Council's objectives;
- An **Audit Committee** which has a remit to 'ensure that areas of concern are reported, including those that may require further scrutiny either by a Committee or Council';

- The **Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy**, which sets out the responsibilities of Officers and Elected Members in relation to fraud and corruption, reinforced by the Councillor's Code of Conduct, the Code of Conduct for employees and the Financial Regulations;
- The **Whistleblowing Policy**, which provides a process for internal disclosure of genuine public interest concerns about the Council and its activities, by employees and others;
- A **Members' Remuneration and Expenses Scheme** adopted by the Council which is consistent with the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee guidance and Statutory Regulations for the levels of salary, allowances and reimbursement of expenses payable;
- The **Register of Elected Members Interests** maintained by the Chief Officer – Governance is available for public inspection and accessible via the Council website, and contains declarations of registrable interests made by Elected Members under the Councillors' Code of Conduct (including remuneration, land & property, shares, contracts, election expenses and gifts/hospitality);
- The **Register of Officers' Interests** for Senior Officers, which is maintained by the Chief Officer - Governance, is available for public inspection and is accessible via the Council website;
- The **Register of Gifts & Hospitality** maintained by the Chief Officer - Governance to record declarations under the Code of Conduct for employees, of gifts or hospitality to Senior Officers; and the registers maintained by Services for other Officers;
- The **Contract Standing Orders**, which enable the Council to require suppliers to adopt policies which demonstrate how they comply with relevant ethical, employment, equality, health and safety, human rights and other legislative requirements to standards expected by the Council;
- Appointment of the **Chief Officer - Governance** to the **statutory role of Monitoring Officer** under S.5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, who is responsible for ensuring agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with;
- Role of the **Chief Officer - Governance** to provide professional legal advice and support required by Council, Committees, Panels, Services or Officers and to be consulted specifically on all matters requiring legal advice as prescribed in the Scheme of Delegation, Scheme of Sub-Delegation, Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders;
- **External professional services contracts** are also available, accessible through the Chief Officer – Finance (Section 95 Officer) and the Chief Officer – Governance, to supplement Officer expertise and to ensure compliance with the law, including external legal services, treasury management advisers, insurance advisers and tax advisers;
- Processes for financial administration, financial control and protection of the Council's resources and assets, are set out in the **Financial Regulations**, and are designed to be compliant with professional guidance and codes of practice, including the CIPFA:
 - Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom;
 - Best Value Accounting Code of Practice;
 - Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities; and
 - Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.

Core Principle B:

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting Principle: Openness (B.1)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the Council's commitment to openness;
2. make decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes; or, if that is not the case, justify the reason for keeping a decision confidential;
3. provide clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders; be explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used, and ensure that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear; and
4. use formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions / courses of action.

Supporting Principle: Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders (B.2)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. effectively engage 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;
2. develop formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and for outcomes to be achieved more effectively; and
3. ensure 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.

Supporting Principle: Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively (B.3)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. establish a clear policy on the type of issues that the Council will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes;
2. ensure that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement;
3. encourage, collect and evaluate the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs;
4. implement effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account;
5. balance feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity; and
6. take account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- **Meetings of the Council, its Committees and Panels** are held in open public forum, as set out in Standing Orders, subject to any exclusions under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
- **Agenda papers and Minutes of meetings of the Council, Committees and Panels** are made publicly available in the interests of openness and transparency, unless exempt under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
- The Council's statutory role in the **Stirling Community Planning Partnership (CPP)** to enable it to deliver its vision, values, plans and outcomes in support of the **Local Outcomes Improvement Plan** and associated **Locality Action Plans** and **Place-based Profiles**, approved by the Community Planning Leadership Group;
- **Formal consultation on the draft Local Outcome Improvement Plan** prepared by the Stirling Community Planning Partnership, and the related public engagement, enable the public, organisations and Community Planning Partners to provide views and comments to inform the development of the final version Local Outcome Improvement Plan;
- The **Budget Consultation** approach, which informs Councillors on the views of the public and others on proposed options for budget decisions to fund expenditure on prioritised services and deliver any planned savings, and which are reflected in the Council's 5-year Business Plan and Strategic Workforce Plan, all approved by the Council;
- **Formal consultation on the development and review of the Stirling Local Development Plan 2017-2037** and supporting policies, which guide the council on matters relating to land use planning, housing and development;
- The Council move towards **Participatory Budgeting**, where a proportion of the Council's budget will be made available for communities to deliver services that they prioritise to best meet their needs, rather than being delivered by the Council;
- Regular **statutory and non-statutory consultation and stakeholder engagement** is undertaken across the Council, supported by Services, to encourage citizens to play an active part in planning and prioritising services and give the community what they want and need;
- Ongoing engagement with **Community-based Test Sites** which enables the Council to explore and develop community empowerment, promote social justice, and work collaboratively and innovatively with partners, local businesses, third-sector and communities to design and deliver services that best meet local needs;
- A **Communications Framework** which supports effective communication of the Council's vision, plans and intended outcomes for citizens and service users through the use of electronic communication channels, including the Council website, Twitter, Facebook and the text-line service.
- **Procedures and guidance are available for Elected Members to assist in dealing with enquiries and undertaking communications with constituents** in a multi-Member Ward situation, which support compliance with both Data Protection Act requirements and the requirements of the national Councillors' Code of Conduct;
- Promotion, support, consultation and engagement with schools' **Parent Councils** and **Parent Networks** established under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 and the

Council's "**Parents as Partners Policy**", which give parents the right to receive information about their children's education, to be represented and have their views expressed to the Council, as Education Authority, through the Parent Council;

- **Standards of Community Engagement**, adopted through the Stirling Community Planning Partnership and adapted from the National Standards for Community Engagement, to help develop the Council's working relationships with communities, citizens and service users and to continuously improve the quality and process of its community engagement activities;
- Support, consultation and engagement with up to 43 **Community Councils** established and governed under the Council's "National Model Scheme for Community Councils", and whose remit is to represent the views and concerns of local people on relevant issues to the Council;
- An ongoing **Review of Community Council governance** to reflect the Council's place-based approach to communities and to strengthen all Community Councils' ability to represent their community, with consideration of:
 - community council boundaries;
 - representation, including involvement of a wider age demographic;
 - improving communication between community councils and others;
 - strengthening the Code of Conduct;
 - how complaints about community councils are best addressed; and
 - resources and support to community councils.
- Ongoing development of arrangements by the Community Engagement Team for dealing with **Participation Requests received from Community Participation Groups under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**, including engagement processes, staff training and development, promotion on the Council website and other electronic means, and annual reporting on Participation Requests;
- A **Public Petitions Process**, which enables the Council to use its powers to meet the needs of communities, citizens and service users by encouraging them to participate in the Council's decision making process and to submit requests for specific action by the Council (or any of its statutory Community Planning Partners) to deliver improved quality and best value services;
- A **Citizenship Appointments Panel** to appoint suitable citizens to pools from which they can be drawn to serve on a range of Panels established by the Council with specific functions, and to support the discharge those Panels' remits. Appointments are made by Council to various Panels, including, but not limited to:
 - The **Parental Appeals Panel**, which determines appeals from parents and young persons in relation to refusal of placing requests, exclusions from school and additional support needs.
 - The local **Licensing Forum**, which keeps the operation of the licensing system in the Licensing Board's area under review, and gives advice and makes recommendations to the Licensing Board on the operation of the system.

Core Principle C:**Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits****Supporting Principle: Defining outcomes (C.1)*****The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:***

1. have a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the Council's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis its' overall strategy, planning and other decisions;
2. specify the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users, whether immediately, or over the course of a year or longer;
3. deliver defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available;
4. identify and manage risks to the achievement of outcomes; and
5. manage service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.

Supporting Principle: Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits (C.2)***The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:***

1. consider and balance the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision;
2. take a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the Council's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints;
3. determine 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; and
4. ensure fair access to services.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- The **Local Outcomes Improvement Plan**, as required under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, sets out the ten-year strategic vision, priorities and intended local outcomes agreed by the Council and its partners in the Community Planning Partnership, for the Stirling area, citizens and service users until 2027;
- **Stirling Council Priorities 2017-2022**, were agreed by the Council in December 2017. These set out the Councils' 6 priority areas, and key objectives to be achieved, over 2017-2022, the direction for service delivery, and anticipated operational and improvement activity by the Chief Executive and Directors;
- Ongoing development of **Place-Based Decision Making** at locality level with communities, which enables the Council to explore, develop and work collaboratively and innovatively with those communities to design and deliver services or funding that best meets local needs;

- The **Stirling City Region Deal Framework and Programme**, which aims to attract transformative investment to Stirling to deliver socially just economic growth, through sector diversification and investment in learning and skills, to encourage growth, reduce poverty, support better health and well-being across the area, and encourage community capacity and social innovation;
- the establishment, development and operation of **Business Improvement Districts (BID's)** in Stirling City Centre and Dunblane supported by the Council, which enable local businesses to work together to plan collective investment in local improvements and contribute to growing the local economy, by sharing the costs and risks associated with new platforms for growth;
- A range of other strategies and action plans will support the achievement of the **Local Outcomes Improvement Plan** and associated **Locality Action Plans**, and define engagement and relationships between the Council, employees, citizens, service users and others. These include:
 - **Stirling Local Development Plan 2017-2037** and supporting policies, which guide the council on matters relating to land use planning, housing and development;
 - **Children's Services Plan 2017-2020**, 'Getting It Right for Children and Young People in Stirling', provides a strategic framework for children's services across Stirling, is built around the multi-agency 'Getting It Right for Every Child' framework, complies with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and is supported by a Children's Rights Officer;
 - **Local Transport Strategy 2017-2027**, which sets out the transport opportunities, projects and interventions required to support and enable the Council's growth aspirations whilst delivering its' broader economic, social, community and environmental objectives;
 - **Corporate Procurement & Commissioning Strategy**, under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, which sets out the procurement and commissioning objectives and actions for the Council, reflecting national and local aspirations and priorities, and which will provide opportunities for the Council to minimise costs and maximise value in the procurement and commissioning of works, goods and services;
 - **Social Enterprise Strategy**, which will aim to contribute to the Council's ambition for inclusive growth by establishing a clear direction for the support, development and growth of social enterprises across the Stirling area, reflecting the future ambition of the sector, both locally and nationally;
 - **Sustainable Development Strategy Framework**, which supports an innovative, resource efficient economy that delivers high levels of employment, and promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being, whilst protecting and enhancing the physical and natural environment;
 - **Stirling Rural Development Action Plan**, which sets out a range of actions and projects to support the sustainable and inclusive development of Stirling's rural economy, linking that development to the Stirling City Region Deal Programme, in particular;
 - **High Streets Economic Action Plan**, which aims to mobilise partners and communities to improve the performance of Stirling's rural town centres and city centres, through local economic action plans, developed in consultation, to bring together partners and source external funding to deliver projects aimed at increasing investment and vibrancy;

- **Employability Strategy 2017-2020**, which aims to ensure that young people and adults have appropriate access to employability services, including skills provision and support to prepare them for work and remove barriers to employment;
 - **Culture Strategy 2016-2020**, which aims to realise Stirling as a place where arts, creativity and culture are recognised and promoted as transformative to the economy of Stirling, to the future of all its communities and to the quality of life of its citizens;
 - **Libraries & Archives Strategy**, which will aim to deliver economic and social well-being to the communities and citizens of Stirling, building on strong community support enjoyed by libraries, by meeting new service demands, growing membership and offering a safe space to meet, study, work, create and make use of new technology; and
 - **Corporate Parenting Strategy**, supported by a multi-agency **Corporate Parenting Group**, which sets out a clear, shared commitment by the Council and its Community Planning Partners to looked after children and young people, to improve their outcomes in line with the implementation of Getting it Right for Every Child Framework, recognising that early intervention, prevention and understanding their needs and responding appropriately will have the most beneficial impact on their life outcomes;
- **Equality Act 2010** and public sector equality duty obligations are considered and applied by the Council when planning and delivering services to citizens and service users. The Council's **Equality Outcomes 2017-21** sets out the Council's continued commitment to pursuing equality for its citizens, communities and employees, by confirming the equality outcomes the Council will seek to achieve over the period;
 - Planning and delivery, and governance of key risks associated with a range of social care services, are supported by the **Child and Adult Protection Committees**, the **Public Protection Forum**, the **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements** and the **Safer and Reducing Offending Board**;
 - The Council continues to monitor and report on progress made in integrating the equality duty into to the Council's services and functions, and in meeting its equality objectives and outcomes. These include the **Mainstreaming Report – Service Delivery**; **Mainstreaming Report – Employment**; **Outcomes Progress Report** and the **Equal Pay Statement**, which demonstrate progress to date and planned improvement actions;
 - Council reports require Officer recommendations to be supported with appropriate information on **Equalities Impact Assessments** to enable Council, its Committees and Panels to make informed decisions on plans and policies and to publicly record the basis of any decision made;
 - **Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005** obligation are met by the Council considering the impact on the environment of its strategies and plans, and consulting statutory agencies and the public to deliver sustainable services to citizens and service users;
 - Council reports are supported where appropriate with information on **Strategic Environmental Impact Assessments** to enable Council, its Committees and Panels to make informed decisions on plans and policies and to publicly record the basis of any decision made.

Core Principle D:

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

Supporting Principle: Determining interventions (D.1)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided; and
2. consider 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.

Supporting Principle: Planning interventions (D.2)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. establish and implement robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets;
2. engage with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered;
3. consider and monitor risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks;
4. ensure arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances;
5. establish 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;
6. ensure capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly;
7. prepare budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan; and
8. inform medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.

Supporting Principle: Optimising achievement of intended outcomes (D.3)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints;
2. ensure the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term;
3. ensure 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; and
4. ensure the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- The **Council's 5-year Business Plan**, updated annually, and approved by Council, which identifies the factors that will impact on the development and delivery of the Council's services and outlines the activities and initiatives the Council plans to undertake over the planning period to achieve its strategic vision for the Stirling area and to support its' Key Priorities and outcomes. It is complementary to the Council's budget and financial planning arrangements, and the 5-year Strategic Workforce Plan;
- The **5-year Strategic Workforce Plan**, which captures the implications of the Council's ongoing process of transformation, provides information on the current workforce and sets out a strategy to ensure the Council's outcomes and priorities are delivered through its most significant resource, its' people and contributes to fulfilling the 5-Year Business Plan aspiration 'to have a flexible, skilled and motivated workforce'. It is complementary to the Council's budget and financial planning arrangements, and the 5-year Business Plan;
- **Service work-planning arrangements**, which support the achievement of the objectives and outcomes of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Stirling Council Priorities 2017-2022, and translate these into specific projects and tasks for each Council Service to deliver towards those objectives and outcomes;
- **Decision-Making Committees**, which have a strategic role in policy development, service review and strategic management of the Council's services, recommending budgets and strategic policy frameworks for approval to secure best value for the Council;
- **Appointment to the Children & Young People Committee (formerly Education Committee) of three statutory representatives of religious bodies** (under Section 124 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973), two teachers elected by teaching staff employed by the Council, and two pupil representatives drawn from a pool of seven elected from the Council's secondary schools;
- A **Motions Procedure** within Standing Orders requiring Officers to provide written information or advice to all Elected Members on any operational, legal, financial or other issues relevant to the subject matter of a proposed Motion in advance of the relevant meeting, and which will be included in the Minutes of the meeting;
- **Council reports** require Officer recommendations to Council, decision-making Committees or Panels, to clearly identify the relevant Council Key Priority, Local Outcome Improvement Plan or Locality Plan objective(s) and outcome(s) to be advanced by the recommendations put forward;
- **Council reports** require Officer recommendations to be supported with appropriate legal, financial, risk, policy, equality and environmental information, and relevant consultations, to enable Council, a Committee or Panel to make an informed decision and to publicly record the basis of any decision made;
- The Council's key role in the **Stirling Community Planning Partnership**, which is governed by:
 - A **Leadership Group** which carries out the functions of the Community Planning Partnership Board, leads the Community Planning Partnership and is responsible for the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement;

- Five thematic **Partnership Sub-Groups**, with distinct roles to oversee the delivery of specific Partnership priorities and outcomes, in relation to children and young people, poverty and inequalities, employability, reducing offending and public protection
- The **Budget Consultation** approach, which informs Councillors on the views of the public and others on proposed options for budget decisions to fund expenditure on prioritised services and deliver planned savings, and which are reflected in the Council's 5-year Business Plan and Strategic Workforce Plan, all approved by the Council;
- The Council move towards **Participatory Budgeting**, where a proportion of the Council's budget will be made available for communities to deliver services that they prioritise to best meet their needs, rather than being delivered by the Council;
- Regular **statutory and non-statutory consultation and stakeholder engagement** is undertaken across the Council, supported by Services, to encourage citizens to play an active part in planning and prioritising services and give the community what they want and need;
- **Complaints procedures and dedicated staff**, including those for social work complaints, which comply with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman **Local Authority Model Complaints Handling Procedure**, enable the Council to obtain, review, analyse and respond to comments and complaints and improve service delivery and service quality;
- A **Complaints Performance reporting and scrutiny** regime, with twice-yearly reporting to the Audit Committee of the Council's performance in complaint handling, as measured against the key performance indicators of the Local Authority Model Complaints Handling Procedure;
- A **Corporate Procurement & Commissioning Strategy**, under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, which sets out the procurement and commissioning objectives and actions for the Council, reflecting national and local aspirations and priorities, and which will provide opportunities for the Council to minimise costs and maximise value in the procurement and commissioning of works, goods and services;
- **Budget calculations** which are robust and **adequate reserves maintained** through the Chief Officer – Finance (Section 95 Officer) responsibility to report progress in delivering the Council's budgets and to present **General Fund and HRA revenue and capital budget scenarios** (including **planned reserves**) to Council to support the Council's **budget & Council Tax setting powers and decisions**;
- The **Performance Management Framework**, which enables the Council to identify, plan and prioritise improvements in capacity and service delivery arrangements by using comparative performance indicator information from the **Local Government Benchmark Framework** to determine future resource allocation to ensure outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently;
- **Governance arrangements with the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board (IJB)**, which include
 - formal delegation of 'in-scope' adult social care functions and Services by the Council to the IJB, as per the Integration Scheme, and related financial / budget transfer to the IJB;
 - Council Elected Member and Officer representation on the IJB, including voting and non-voting membership;
 - the Chief Officer of the IJB is a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team;
 - formal commissioning arrangements from the IJB, as set out in the 'Direction' under Section 26(1) of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014.

Core Principle E:

Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Supporting Principle: Developing the Council's capacity (E.1)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. review operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness;
2. improve resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated, so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently;
3. recognise the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved; and
4. develop and maintain an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.

Supporting Principle: Developing the capability of the Council's leadership and other individuals (E.2)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. develop protocols to ensure elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early and a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained;
2. publish a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body;
3. ensure the Council Leader and the Chief executive have clearly defined and distinct leadership roles; the Chief Executive leads in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs, and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority;
4. develop the capabilities of Members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the Council 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 induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available;
 - ensuring Members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and can 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.
5. ensure that there are structures in place to encourage public participation;
6. take steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections;
7. hold staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs; and
8. ensure arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- The Council's **Asset Management Plans**, including School Estate Management and the Roads Asset Management Plan (RAMP) which support regular review of asset condition and the development of capital investment plans for programmed and reactive asset management activity, to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the Council's physical asset base;
- The **Performance Management Framework**, which enables the Council to identify, plan and prioritise improvements in capacity and service delivery arrangements by using comparative performance indicator information from the **Local Government Benchmark Framework** to determine how future resources are allocated to ensure outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently;
- The Council's **partnership and collaborative working arrangements with a range of external organisations and other bodies** enable those organisations and bodies to provide communities and citizens with agreed services in line with the Council's Key Priorities and objectives, and supplement the Council's service capacity. Such arrangements currently include those with Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership, Stirling Community Enterprise Ltd, Active Stirling Ltd., McLaren Leisure Centre and Sistema Scotland (Big Noise Raploch);
- The structural, legal, funding and governance arrangements in place between the **Council and its arms-length external organisations (ALEO's) and other strategically-funded bodies** are governed by the Council's local Code Of Practice: Following The Public Pound And Funding External Bodies;
- A **Scheme of Delegation** which defines the reserved responsibilities and powers of the Council and the delegated responsibilities and powers of Committees, Panels, the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers. The Scheme is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes to Council structures and Member/Officer roles;
- A **Scheme of Sub-Delegation** of the responsibilities and powers which the Chief Executive delegates to Directors, the conditions for exercising those powers and the extent to which Directors can further delegate powers to other Officers. The Scheme is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes to Council structures and Member/Officer roles;
- The **5-year Strategic Workforce Plan**, which captures the implications of the Council's ongoing process of transformation, provides information on the current workforce and sets out a strategy to ensure the Council's outcomes and priorities are delivered through its most significant resource, its' people and contributes to fulfilling the Five Year Business Plan aspiration 'to have a flexible, skilled and motivated workforce';
- **Post-election induction and ongoing training opportunities for Elected Members** on their roles and responsibilities, and to support their ongoing development (e.g. Councillors' Code of Conduct and appointments to external bodies), as delivered by appropriate Officers and training providers;
- The provision of **learning and development opportunities** for Council Officers, consistent with the 5-year Strategic Workforce Plan, delivered through:
 - **Council-wide induction and learning & development methods** that ensure employees possess skills and demonstrate behaviour consistent with the Council's culture and values;

- a consistent, fair and transparent **Council-wide Personal Review & Development Framework** and process to support appropriate personal development by employees;
- **workforce planning**, which looks to the future needs of the Council, assesses people and skills availability and develops plans to support service continuity and provide opportunity for employee progression and development.
- A **Qualifications Policy**, which sets out the Council's support for employees to undertake an academic qualification or recognised course of study (whether or not a mandatory requirement of their job) and underpins the Council's values and Equal Opportunities in Employment policy;
- **Leadership and Management Development Programmes**, consistent with the 5-year Strategic Workforce Plan, continue to underpin the development and support all of the Council's leaders and managers, including the Corporate Management Team, Directors and Senior Managers to perform their roles and enhance individual and collective skills and behaviours;
- A **Public Petitions Process**, which enables the Council to use its powers to meet the needs of communities, citizens and service users by encouraging them to participate in the Council's decision making process and to submit requests for specific action by the Council (or any of its statutory Community Planning Partners) to deliver improved quality and best value services;
- A **Citizenship Appointments Panel** to appoint suitable citizens to pools from which they can be drawn to serve on a range of Panels established by the Council with specific functions, and to support the discharge those Panels' remits. Appointments are made by Council to various Panels, including, but not limited to the **Parental Appeals Panel** and the local **Licensing Forum**;
- **Appointment of appropriate Officers to various statutory "proper officer" roles**, including:
 - **Chief Finance Officer**, as required by S.95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
 - Senior Manager: Children & Families and Criminal Justice as the **Chief Social Work Officer**, as required by S.3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968;
 - Senior Manager: Schools, Learning & Education as the **Chief Education Officer**, as required by S.78 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980;
 - Chief Officer – Governance as the **Monitoring Officer**, as required by S.5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
 - Chief Officer - Governance as the **Clerk to the Council**, as required by S.43 and S.50 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
- **Job descriptions for each of the post-holders appointed to the statutory proper officer roles, and personal objectives** reviewed by their Director as part of their performance review and development process;
- The **Chief Officer - Finance** (Section 95 Officer) is a professionally qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and participates in that institute's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme;
- The **Chief Officer – Governance** is a professionally qualified member of the Law Society of Scotland and participates in the Society's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme;

- The **Chief Social Work Officer responsibilities** are defined under S.5 (1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and supplementary guidance issued by the Scottish Government, and under the Council's Scheme of Sub-Delegation;
- The **Chief Social Work Officer role and function** includes the provision of effective professional advice to Elected Members and Officers, the promotion of appropriate leadership, values and standards of professional practice in the delivery of Social Services by the Council, and accountability for the range of Social Services provided by the Council and its partners;
- The **Chief Education Officer responsibilities** are defined under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, and under the Council's Scheme of Sub-Delegation;
- The **Chief Education Officer role and function** includes the provision of effective professional advice to Elected Members and Officers, the promotion of appropriate leadership, values and standards of professional practice in the delivery of Education and Learning Services by the Council, and accountability for the range of Education and Learning Services provided by the Council and its partners;
- The **statutory proper officer post-holders are members of the Corporate Management Team** and have clear professional leadership responsibility for the leadership of their respective professional and other staff;
- **The Chief Executive's** overall responsibility and accountability to Council as **Head of Paid Service** for all aspects of operational management is set out in the **Job Description and** the Council's Scheme of Delegation;
- **The Chief Executive has personal objectives** reviewed by the Council Leader as part of the Chief Executive's performance appraisal process;
- **Job descriptions for the Directors and personal objectives** reviewed by the Chief Executive as part of their performance review and development process.

Core Principle F:

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

Supporting Principle: Managing risk (F.1)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. recognise that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision-making;
2. implement robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively; and
3. ensure that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.

Supporting Principle: Managing performance (F.2)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. monitor service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review;
2. make 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;
encourage effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making;
3. provide Members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement; and
4. ensure there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).

Supporting Principle: Robust internal control (F.3)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. align the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives;
2. evaluate and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis;
3. ensure effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place;
4. ensure additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor; and
5. ensure that an Audit Committee (or equivalent group / 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; and that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.

Supporting Principle: Managing data (F.4)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data;
2. ensure effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies; and
3. review and audit regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.

Supporting Principle: Strong public financial management (F.5)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure financial management supports both long-term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance; and
2. ensure well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- An **Audit Committee**, chaired by a Member of the Opposition, which has the remit and delegations set out in the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation including **scrutiny of risk management**, and which complies with CIPFA's Audit Committee Principles in Local Authorities in Scotland;
- A **Risk Management Policy and Framework**, which communicate how risk management is implemented within the Council, define the approach and outline responsibility for risk management activities across Elected Members, the Audit Committee, Corporate Management Team, Senior Managers, Service Managers and employees;
- A **Corporate Risk Management Group**, chaired by the Resilience & Risk Team Leader and comprising Risk Leads from Services, representation from Internal Audit, Corporate Health & Safety and Insurance Section, has the remit to share knowledge and good practice across the Council, to provide an opportunity for peer scrutiny of Corporate and Service risks and to support the development of a consistent approach to risk management activity across the Council;
- **Strategic Risk Register** detailing significant Council-wide risks, strategic risks and risks escalated from Service Risk Registers; reported to Corporate Management Team regularly for review and to each meeting of the Audit Committee; updated on an ongoing basis by Risk Monitors and Risk Owners providing risk information updates to the Resilience & Risk Team Leader;
- **Service Risk Registers** detailing risks identified by each Service and which are managed by Senior Managers, Service Managers and others; reported to the Resilience & Risk Team Leader quarterly to ensure compliance with the Risk Management Framework and to enable risks to be managed effectively;

- A **Community Risk Register** compiled in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, detailing potential events that the Council as a responder agency may have to deal with, and which provides a basis for it to develop, implement and confirm emergency action plans;
- **Council reports require** Officers' recommendations to be supported with **appropriate information on risk issues** to enable Council, decision-making Committees and Panels to make an informed, risk aware decision and to publicly record the basis of any decision made;
- The **Performance Management Framework**, which enables the Council to monitor and manage performance and undertake review and improvement activities, supports regular reporting of internal, statutory and **Local Government Benchmark Framework** performance indicators to the Corporate Management Team, Decision-Making Committees and to the Council;
- A **Scheme of Delegation** which defines the reserved responsibilities and powers of the Council and the delegated responsibilities and powers of Committees, Panels, the Chief Executive and Statutory Officers. The Scheme is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes to Council structures and Member/Officer roles;
- A **Scheme of Sub-Delegation** of the responsibilities and powers which the Chief Executive delegates to Directors, the conditions for exercising those powers and the extent to which Directors can further delegate powers to other Officers. The Scheme is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes to Council structures and Member/Officer roles;
- Processes for financial administration, financial control and protection of the Council's resources and assets, are set out in the **Financial Regulations**, and are designed to be compliant with professional guidance and codes of practice, including the CIPFA:
 - Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom;
 - Best Value Accounting Code of Practice;
 - Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities; and
 - Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services.
- The **Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy**, which sets out the responsibilities of Officers and Elected Members in relation to fraud and corruption, reinforced by the Councillor's Code of Conduct, the Code of Conduct for employees and the Financial Regulations;
- The **Whistleblowing Policy**, which provides a process for internal disclosure of genuine public interest concerns about the Council and its activities, by employees and others;
- **Information management policies and procedures** are in place to comply with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, including processing and recording FOI requests, exemptions and appeals and the making of a **Publication Scheme**, which improve citizens' access to recorded information held by the Council and deliver greater openness and transparency;
- **Data Protection Policies and Procedures** are in place to comply with the **Data Protection Act 1998**, including fair and lawful processing of personal data held by the Council, subject access requests, exemptions and appeals, which assure citizens' confidence and rights in terms of their personal data held by the Council. Work is underway to meet the emerging, broader requirements of the EU's **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, coming into effect in 2018;
- An **Information Management Group**, chaired by the Technology & Information Manager, has Council-wide representation and has the remit to contribute to, and have oversight of, strategy, policy and procedures to promote the effective management of information throughout its lifecycle;

- The **Chief Officer - Finance is the statutory proper officer for the administration of the Council's financial affairs** (Section 95 Officer), has direct access to both the Audit Committee and to the External Auditor under the Scheme of Delegation and through day-to-day operational working relationships;
- The **Chief Officer - Finance** (Section 95 Officer) **is a member of the Corporate Management Team** and has clear professional leadership responsibility for the Council's Finance function;
- The Chief Officer – Finance (Section 95 Officer) provides **financial advice and support to the Council and its Committees** for monitoring the Council's budget and financial position, in line with responsibilities defined within the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the Financial Regulations and in the 2016 CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government;
- A **Corporate Procurement & Commissioning Strategy**, under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, which sets out the procurement and commissioning objectives and actions for the Council, reflecting national and local aspirations and priorities, and which will provide opportunities for the Council to minimise costs and maximise value in the procurement and commissioning of works, goods and services;
- **Council reports require** Officer recommendations to be supported with **appropriate information on financial issues** to enable Council, Committees and Panels to make an informed decision and to publicly record the basis of any decision made;
- A **central Finance function of professionally qualified, and other experienced staff, under the direction and leadership of the Chief Officer - Finance** (Section 95 Officer), providing financial services to Council, Elected Members and Services;
- An **approved General Fund Revenue budget and Housing Revenue Account budget for Council and Services**, with regular budget monitoring and projected out-turn reporting to Council, Audit Committee and Corporate Management Team, as appropriate;
- An **approved General Fund Capital Programme and Housing Capital Programme** with regular monitoring of programme performance and projected out-turn reporting to Council, Audit Committee and Corporate Management Team, as appropriate;
- A **Treasury Management Strategy & Policy and Prudential Framework Indicators** for the management of cash-flows, investments and borrowing developed in compliance with the CIPFA "Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities" and the CIPFA "Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services";
- **Interim and Annual Treasury Management Strategy & Performance Reports**, which outline the borrowing, investment, cash-flow strategies and prudential indicators that support the Council's financial and budget strategies and reporting on actual performance achieved to Council, Audit Committee and Corporate Management Team, as appropriate;
- **Budget calculations** which are robust and **adequate reserves maintained** through the Chief Officer – Finance (Section 95 Officer) responsibility to report progress in delivering the Council's budgets and to present **General Fund and HRA revenue and capital budget scenarios** (including **planned reserves**) to Council to support the Council's **budget & Council Tax setting powers and decisions**;
- **External professional services contracts** are also available, accessible through the Chief Officer – Finance (Section 95 Officer) and the Chief Officer – Governance, to supplement Officer expertise, including treasury management advisers, insurance advisers and tax advisers.

Core Principle G:

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

Supporting Principle: Implementing good practices in transparency (G.1)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. write and communicate reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate; and
2. strike 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.

Supporting Principle: Implementing good practices in reporting (G.2)

The Council will demonstrate good governance through behaviours and actions that:

1. report at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way;
2. ensure Members and senior management own the results reported;
3. ensure robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied, and publish the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the Annual Governance Statement);
4. ensure that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate; and
5. ensure 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.

Supporting Principle: Assurance and effective accountability (G.3)

The Council will demonstrate good governance, in practice, through behaviours and actions that:

1. ensure that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon;
2. ensure an effective Internal Audit service with direct access to Members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon;
3. welcome peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations;
4. gain assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement; and
5. ensure that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

The Council's current and developing arrangements that demonstrate good corporate governance, reflect the Framework's principles, and provide assurance, include:

- **Meetings of the Council, its Committees and Panels are held in public** as set out in Standing Orders, subject to any exclusions under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
- **Agenda papers, reports and minutes of meetings of the Council, Decision-Making Committees and Panels are made publicly available** in the interests of transparency, except where an exemption required to be applied under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
- **Council reports** are required to include appropriate legal, financial, risk, policy, equality and environmental information; and information on relevant Council Key Priorities and Local Outcome Improvement Plan or Locality Plan issues and consultations, to aid public understanding, to enable the Council, a Committee or Panel to make an informed decision and to publicly record the basis of any decision made;
- The **Performance Management Framework**, which enables the Council to monitor and manage performance and undertake review and improvement activities, supports regular reporting of internal, statutory and **Local Government Benchmark Framework** performance indicators to the Corporate Management Team, Decision-Making Committees and to the Council;
- **A range of periodic and annual reports** support the Performance Management Framework, identifying Council performance and improvement actions, where relevant, and include:
 - External Audit Annual Report to Those Charged with Governance; and
 - Strategic Priorities and Progress Reports (for Decision-Making Committees)
- The **Council Annual Report**, which reports publicly on progress made by the Council towards its Key Priorities and its performance targets;
- The **Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report**, which reports publicly on the key priorities, challenges, improvements and achievements in the delivery of social services by the Council. It complies with the format provided by the Scottish Government's Chief Social Work Adviser, which supports a standardised approach nationally for all local authorities;
- **Annual Accounts**, which are prepared in compliance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (CIPFA SoRP) and are subject to external audit review and certification, incorporate a Management Commentary, summarising financial and performance information; a Remuneration Report and the Council's Annual Governance Statement;
- **Publication on the Council website of the amounts and composition of all Elected Members salaries, allowances and expenses** for the previous financial year by 1st June each year, and regular publication of expenses claim forms submitted by Elected Members;
- An Annual Report to the Audit Committee on the governance, activity and performance of all relevant **Arms-Length External Organisations and Strategically Funded Bodies**;
- An **Audit Committee**, chaired by a Member of the Opposition, with the remit and delegations set out in the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation including scrutiny of internal controls, risk management and the Local Code of Corporate Governance, and which complies with CIPFA's Audit Committee Principles in Local Authorities in Scotland;

- An **Audit Committee Annual Report**, which enables the Audit Committee to clearly and publicly demonstrate and report how it delivers its responsibility and accountability for providing the Council with independent assurance on the adequacy of its internal control, risk management and corporate governance arrangements;
- An **Internal Audit Charter** approved by the Audit Committee, which defines the purpose, scope, objectives, authority and principal responsibilities of Internal Audit;
- An **Internal Audit function** including professionally qualified and experienced staff, reviewed and reported on annually by the External Auditor in terms of effectiveness and compliance with the 2017 'Public Sector Internal Audit Standards';
- The **Audit Service Manager has access to, and meets regularly and independently with, the Chair of the Audit Committee** to discuss matters relevant to the proper functioning of the Audit Committee and the Council's Internal Audit function;
- **Internal Audit Strategic Plans & Annual Audit Plans** are developed by the Audit Service Manager, identify areas of key Corporate and Service risks, are regularly updated and monitored and are reported annually to the Council's Audit Committee for approval and adoption;
- **Internal Audit Reports** include recommendations and an agreed, prioritised Action Plan to help Services take appropriate action to address governance, systems or control risks and are agreed with Service management. They are submitted the Audit Committee for information and scrutiny and contain a graded statement of assurance on the effectiveness of controls and governance arrangements, and consider the four dimensions of wider-scope public audit from Audit Scotland's Code of Audit Practice (2016), as and where appropriate;
- A group **Annual Governance Statement**, approved by the Audit Committee and signed by the Council Leader and the Chief Executive is included in our published Annual Accounts and reports on the extent to which the Council and its group entities comply with the Local Code of Corporate Governance, have monitored the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control arrangements during the year, and any planned changes; it is independently reviewed and considered each year by the Council's external auditor;
- **Annual Certificates of Assurance** are prepared and signed by each Service Director in relation to the operation of the governance, risk management and internal control arrangements in place within their Service, to support the Annual Governance Statement, and are supplemented by Assurance Checklists provided to Services by the Audit Service Manager to assist the process;
- An **annual review and report by Internal Audit on the Council's compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance**, including an improvement Action Plan, and which supports the publication of the Annual Governance Statement;
- An **Internal Audit Annual Report and Assurance Statement**, which reports on the Council's Internal Audit function, its achievement of Audit Plans and performance targets, compliance with the 2017 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, and provides the Audit Service Manager's Assurance Statement in support of the Annual Governance Statement;
- **External audit and scrutiny reports from Audit Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspector of Education, Care Inspectorate, Mental Welfare Commission, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator** are subject to formal presentation and consideration by Service management, the Corporate Management Team, Committee and

Council, where appropriate for agreement of planned actions to improve service quality or performance;

- **National thematic reports from the Accounts Commission for Scotland and Audit Scotland** highlight issues, trends and developments in the local authority sector and are subject to formal presentation and consideration by the Audit Committee for agreement of planned actions to improve service quality or performance, and Service responses or progress updates.