**Delivering Good Governance in Telford & Wrekin Council
Local Code of Good Governance 2023/24**

> **Definition:**
> **Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.**
>
> In order for the Members and Employees[1] of Telford & Wrekin Council to deliver good governance whilst working to achieve the Council's objectives they must **act in the public interest at all times.**

Public Interest Principles
- Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values (including the Council's values[2]), and respecting the rule of law.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement (including with individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders).

- Achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

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

D. Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

E. Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaders and the individuals within it. This includes ensuring effective relationships and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Members and officers.

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

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and assurance (including audit) to deliver effective accountability.

Annex 1 of this document details the framework in place to deliver good governance.

Monitoring and Review
This Local Code of Good Governance is subject to regular review including assessing the effectiveness of the processes contained within the Code.

The results of this review are reported as part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The table below explains how the Council meets the core principles, systems, policies and procedures it has in place to support this.

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[1] Employees include partners, joint arrangements and volunteers.
[2] Fairness & Respect – Ownership - Openness & Honesty - Involvement

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

- Member and Officer Codes of Conduct underpin the standards of behaviour expected by members and officers
- Designated statutory officers in place – Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Chief Financial Officer (Director: Finance & Human Resources), Monitoring Officer (Director: Policy & Governance), Director of Children's Services (Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support), Director of Adult Services (Director: Adult Social Care) and Director of Public Health (Director: Health & Well-Being), Chief Internal Auditor (Audit & Governance Lead Manager), Data Protection Officer (Audit & Governance Lead Manager)
- The Constitution (which includes the Scheme of Delegations, Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders), Forward Plan and decision making processes
- A Legal Services team to ensure that the Council operates within existing legislation and is aware of and acts upon proposed changes to legislation
- The Standards Committee, Audit Committee, scrutiny function and other regulatory committees
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Whistleblowing (Speak Up) and Prosecution policies support the Council's governance processes and anti-fraud and corruption culture
- The democratic decision making and accountability processes contained within the Constitution
- The development of internal controls and checks within new systems and when existing systems are reviewed
- The Council's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016)
- Clear governance arrangements to manage the Council's change programmes and restructuring occurring across the Council and key capital projects
- The Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards and their associated accountability with an independent Chair

Core Principle B: **Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement (including with individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders)**

- Adoption of an Information Rights Policy that details how information requests will be handled
- Adoption of a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice which details how the Council processes personal data
- The Council's Information Governance arrangements include a Caldicott Guardian and an Information Governance Framework sponsored by a designated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), data and information security and sharing policies and procedures. There is also a comprehensive training and awareness programme
- The Director – Housing, Employment & Infrastructure is leading the development of a new vision document for the borough
- Standard format for all agenda, reports and minutes for Council/committee meetings that are posted on to the Council's website.
- The Council's Medium Term Plan which outlines the Council's ambitions and priorities based on stakeholder feedback and these inform the service and financial planning process and personal targets
- Council Vision, Priorities and Values
- Council website provides help to residents to understand the Councils Vision, Priorities and Values and to access services
- Local consultation has taken place using specific consultation and engagement activity for services and service areas
- Customer satisfaction survey undertaken

- The Council's communication, consultation and engagement strategies ensure that the local community knows what the Council is doing, receives feedback from them including the identification of their needs for incorporation into the Council's vision, priorities and values

Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

- Comprehensive budget strategy and management of the associated risks of reduced resources provides robust financial management and regular reporting to members;
- A process for the completion and approval of business cases' for use of the Capacity Fund, Invest to Save Fund and use of consultants
- The Performance Management Framework and data quality systems. These provide reports to SMT and Cabinet
- Projects are managed, as appropriate, within the principles of good practice. This includes risk identification and management
- The Council has an Environmental Policy highlighting its commitment to sustainable environment. It also has a Sustainable Procurement Policy
- A Social Value Policy Charter is in place that is designed to assist commissioners and procurers to maximise opportunities to improve the social, economic and environment condition of our local area through effective commissioning and procurement.

Core Principle D: Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- A standardised format of decision making reports is used to ensure that all relevant information is considered. Options are clearly defined and analysed to ensure decisions are based on the best possible information
- The Commissioning Strategy is applied to ensure clear alignment to need
- There is a clear reporting mechanism for performance information which is presented alongside the financial information for the corresponding period
- The Council's performance framework links directly to the Council's outcomes. Performance is reported regularly to members.
- The annual budget is prepared in line with agreed priorities. The Council publishes its Financial Strategy annually to set an indicative three year financial plan to fit the longer term strategic vision as well as a detailed one year budget. This is intended to include realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure.
- Resources to assist commissioners and procurers to demonstrate the range and amount of social value generated or the financial value to society as a result of the social value they generate.

Core Principle E: Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaders and the individuals within it. This includes ensuring effective relationships and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Member and officers

- The Council's Human Resources function and workforce /organisational development procedures are supported by clear recruitment processes. These are followed up by on-line / face to face induction training (which includes information on the constitution, key policies, procedures, laws and regulations appropriate to the post and experience of the post holder) and on-going training and development
- A Member Development Programme to ensure members are properly equipped and have the capacity to fulfil their roles

- Governance awareness and training for members within their Member Development Programme and for officers through induction, Ollie and Staff news (updates/reminders on any revised governance arrangements, including information governance).
- Management Development Programme
- Use of Learning Pool (Ollie) as an online learning and training tool that allows courses to be tailored to Council and individual needs
- A Scheme of Delegation that is reviewed annually in light of legal and organisational changes
- A Constitution that sets out financial management arrangements through the Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules
- Members are updated on legal and policy changes etc. as required
- Induction programmes for all members and employees
- Essential learning for employees is identified and made available
- Staff are annually appraised which includes the identification of training and development needs and drawing up of training action plans to address these
- Apprenticeship Programme in place offering training, skills and experience in local government.
- Health and Safety policies designed to protect and enhance the welfare of staff are actively promoted and monitored.
- A coaching and mentoring scheme is in place to build a pool of people who are skilled in facilitating personal development tools and to develop internal coaching capacity. This network provides group and individual personal development and coaching support to help people
- Corporate wide employee survey
- Cabinet Member for Finance & Governance is the lead members responsible for corporate governance including risk management. The key officer for Corporate Governance including risk management is the Chief Executive. The service and financial planning process incorporates risk management and strategic risks are reviewed by SMT and agreed by the Cabinet

Core Principle F: **Managing risks, performance and data through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

- Risk management arrangements that are embedded across all service areas as part of the service planning process and help inform decision making
- The Senior Management Team, regularly reviews the Strategic Risk Register, and seeks assurances that it is kept up to date and actions to mitigate risks are implemented.
- Operational risks are reviewed by risk owners on a periodic basis
- Council strategic risks have been identified and a member of the Senior Management Team assigned as the risk owner for each risk
- The Council has scrutiny committees which operate under clear terms of reference and rules of procedures laid down in the Constitution. Scrutiny Committee chairs and members have clearly laid down accountabilities in the Constitution. Members may not participate in the scrutiny of decisions they were involved in
- There is a standardised format for all committee reports which includes background to the report, any recommendations that decisions need to be made upon together with reasons behind those recommendations
- Reports and minutes and decisions under member consideration are published on the website and are available in hard copy in a variety of formats on request.
- Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations set out the Council's arrangements and ensure that processes continue to operate consistently
- Internal audit operates to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and on a risk basis reviews the Council's systems and processes set out to achieve the Council's priorities in order to provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control

- The Council has processes and documents to support governance and reporting arrangements for partnerships, issues, risk management framework, internal control environment, financial reporting and treasury management
- The Council's Treasury Management Strategy and arrangements conform to CIPFA and External Audit guidance and is monitored by the Audit Committee
- An annual report is produced by Internal Audit which provides an opinion on the Council's control environment, and a self-assessment of its arrangements against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which is subject to regular review and is approved by the Audit Committee
- Annual fraud reports are provided to the Audit Committee detailing anti-fraud activity in the year
- An Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that is subject to review by the Audit Committee
- Training is provided to Audit Committee members on areas relevant to their role
- There are frameworks in place in relation to child and adult safeguarding
- The Council has an Information Governance team committed to ensuring the principles of Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Transparency are followed
- Information governance and security awareness including individual responsibilities and good practice is raised and embedded with officers and elected members through information governance training
- The Council's Information Governance Strategy provides guidance on the arrangements that must be in place to ensure personal data is kept protected and secure
- Effective information sharing is undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Council's Data Protection Policy and Information Sharing Policy
- Data subjects are informed why their personal information is being collected and how it will be processed (including when shared with other bodies) through the Council's overall Privacy Notices published on our website and individual Privacy Statements on forms, in booklets etc.
- Data verification and validation processes are integrated within systems and processes
- An audited and signed Statement of Accounts is published on an annual basis containing:
    - A statement of responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts
    - A statement of the Council's accounting policies
- An Annual Governance Statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer/Head of Paid Service
- Financial procedures are documented in the Financial Regulations
- A Financial Strategy is in place
- The financial position is reported on a regular basis to Cabinet
- SMT meets weekly with regular management meetings with Service Delivery Managers and Group Managers/Team Leaders;

Core Principle G: **Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and assurance (including audit) to deliver effective accountability**

- Agendas, reports and minutes are published on the Council's website
- Adoption of a style guide document that outlines how to communicate more effectively and to ensure communications are consistent and clear
- Adoption of the National Transparency Code
- The Cabinet is the Council's key decision making body and makes decisions within the policy framework approved by Full Council. It is made up of the Leader, who is elected by the Council, and up to nine members. When key decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Cabinet forward plan in so far as they can be anticipated. If these key decisions are to be discussed with Council officers at a meeting of the Cabinet, this will be open for the public to attend except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. The Cabinet has to make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to

- make a decision which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council as a whole to decide
- Annual Financial Statements are compiled, published to timetable and included on the Council's website.
- An annual report from each of the scrutiny committees is presented to Council alongside reports from the portfolio holders; the scrutiny reports detail the past work of the Committees, the present work and the plans for the future
- Completion of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS)
- A Business Plan and Financial Strategy setting out the Council's mission and priorities.
- The AGS sets out the Council's governance framework and the results of the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements. The AGS includes areas for improvement.
- An effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained. The Service has direct access to members and provides assurance on governance arrangements via an annual report containing an opinion on the Council's internal control arrangements
- External Audit provides an annual opinion on the Council's financial statements and arrangements for securing value for money
- The Council actively welcomes peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies

Local Good Governance Framework – 2023/24

Integrity, ethics and values

Audit Committee	Codes of Conduct
Statutory officer roles	Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy/Report
Constitution	Complaints process
Decision making process	Open data & Transparency Code
Financial Rules	Whistleblowing Policy
Register of Interests	Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Openness and engagement

Information Rights policy	Open data
Members role	Complaints Policy/annual report
AGS statement and final accounts	Public consultations
Committee meetings streamed	Customer survey
Council website	Whistleblowing Policy
Transparency Code	Committee papers published

Defining outcomes

Decision making process	Committee reports
Performance framework	Procurement Strategy
Social Value Policy	Committee structure
Service plans	Sustainability Policy
Service and financial planning process	Environmental Policy
Commissioning Policy	Council Plan

Determine interventions

Engagement with stakeholders	Strategic Risk Register
AGS/AGS Action Plan	Council Plan
Decision making process	Complaints process
Role of members	Budget Strategy
Financial Strategy	Whistleblowing Policy
Service Plans	Forward Plan

Council capacity

Member Development	Induction programme
APPD process	CPD
Recruitment and selection	Health and wellbeing
Online learning	Employee survey
Peer reviews	Employee assist programme
Management development	Designated essential learning

Risk and performance	Performance framework	External inspection
	APPD process	Internal audit
	Strategic risk register	AGS
	Service planning	Service and financial planning
	External audit of accounts	Committee framework
	Peer reviews	Constitution

Transparency and audit	Audit Committee	Council website
	Internal audit function	Transparency Code
	External Audit	Complaints annual report
	Scrutiny	Information rights policy
	Open data	AGS
	Annual accounts	Member role