

Chesterfield Borough Council

Local Code of Corporate Governance – 2023/24 Review

CIPFA/SOLACE core principles of good Governance	In place at CBC
<p>Principle A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p> <p>Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.</p>	<p>There is a four year Council Plan (2023 – 2027) that includes a vision statement. A delivery plan is also approved by Cabinet on an annual basis. The Council Plan is cascaded down through SLT, CLT, service managers meetings, managers weekly bulletins, team meetings and the via aspire intranet.</p> <p>Decision making is set out in the Constitution. The Constitution is reviewed and updated as necessary, with amendments approved by Standards and Audit committee/Full Council (as appropriate).</p> <p>Member and Officers Codes of Conduct are within the Constitution along with protocols on Member/Officer relations.</p> <p>Amongst others, the Council has the following policies/strategies/protocols in place which are on the Council's intranet: -</p> <p>Anti- Harassment and Bullying policy Anti- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption policy (refreshed September 23) Equality and diversity policy</p>

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	<p>Recruitment policy Whistleblowing policy Procurement Strategy Partnership guidance/protocol. Legal Services Protocols Complaints procedures Staff competency framework</p> <p>Declarations of interest are expected from Members and Officers. Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality are recorded and reviewed by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Member and Officer induction, training and refresher cover: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural and ethical values • Standards • Social Media • Safeguarding • Data Protection and Information Security • Fraud and corruption • Equality and Diversity <p>In 2023/24 the Council introduced a new performance appraisal system – Valuing Individuals and Performance (VIP) that involves quarterly catch ups, each time discussing one of the Council’s values.</p>

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	<p>There are 2 Scrutiny Committees: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Economic Growth and Communities 2) Resilient Council <p>An annual Scrutiny report goes to Full Council.</p> <p>There is also an Audit and Standards Committee. Each Committee has its own terms of reference. Committee minutes and reports are retained.</p> <p>All jobs are required to have job descriptions and person specifications that must be reviewed each time a post becomes vacant. Employment contracts specify whether posts are politically restricted and the constraints placed on office holders.</p> <p>The Service Director - Finance is the nominated section 151 Officer and there is also a nominated Deputy. CIPFA'S statement on the role of the Chief Financial Officer is complied with.</p> <p>The Council has a Monitoring Officer and team to deal with legal breaches. The Monitoring Officer has oversight of governance at the Council and a Deputy Monitoring Officer (in whom vests the legal function in the absence of the Monitoring Officer).</p>
Principle B Ensuring openness and	Communication means are: -

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<p>comprehensive stakeholder engagement Local government is run for the public good, organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual financial statements • Council Plan • The council Newsletter” Your Chesterfield” • The council website • Social media channels including video, photos and infographic content • An annual report to tenants is prepared and shared with all residents via Your Chesterfield as well as being published on the Council’s website. • Housing have a Customer involvement agreement and provide a variety of opportunities for tenants to be involved in and give their views through a range of formal and informal consultation routes. • The tenants engagement team and housing management teams also base themselves within Communities via Community van visits across the Borough where tenants can come and talk about anything which may be affecting them • Housing’s Tenant Challenge Panel and Tenant Performance Group (Scrutiny equivalent) have a clear set of Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for Members. • Housing’s Communication and accessibility tenant group has a working together agreement and a code of conduct for members. • FOI Publication Scheme • Council Tax information is on the website • There is a Community Engagement Group and a Communications and Engagements Strategy which includes an annual action plan.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder groups identified for different consultation types e.g. community and voluntary sector, sport and leisure organisations, planning consultations, equality and diversity forum etc. • Bespoke communication consultation and research plans. • Housing’s Tenant Challenge Panel (Scrutiny equivalent) has a clear set of Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for Members. • Derbyshire wide engagement group to share best practice and develop joint approaches where applicable. • Housing operates a variety of ways for tenants to be involved and give their views e.g. focus groups/ formal meetings/ informal drop in’s/ use of a consultation bus in the community. <p>In terms of committee meetings: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual meeting timetable is published. • There is a template for Committee reports with standard headings and an online system in place for reviewing and signoff of reports via ModGov. • Officers reports are all retained with the Committee agendas and papers. • All committee reports are “open” agenda items unless there is a valid reason to exclude the public. • All decisions by Committees are minuted. <p>Decision making is set out in the Constitution. All Committees have adopted</p>

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	<p>Terms of Reference and have scheduled meetings during the year.</p> <p>A partnership guidance/protocol has been developed. This includes arrangements for considering partnership arrangements including concerns and resource requests via Corporate Leadership Meetings.</p> <p>Results of consultation exercises are published.</p> <p>Annual State of the Borough Report and briefing notes on emerging issues.</p>
<p>Principle C Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p> <p>The long-term nature and impact of many of local government’s responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority’s purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources</p>	<p>The Council Plan covers 4 years and defines the Council’s vision and priorities. This sets the framework for all service plans. Progress against the objectives within the Council Plan is reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.</p> <p>The Council Plan is aligned to the medium-term financial plan (2024 – 2027) and is refreshed each year based on the affordability of each of the priorities.</p> <p>The Council’s financial arrangements have been assessed against the CIPFA Financial Management Code and been found to be largely compliant.</p> <p>The performance framework includes quarterly challenge at the the Corporate Leadership Team meeting and half yearly at Overview and Performance Scrutiny.</p> <p>The Housing and General Fund capital programme is approved by Members each year. Officers have to submit capital bids.</p>

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<p>available.</p>	<p>There is a treasury management strategy that is reviewed and approved on an annual basis.</p> <p>The State of the Borough Report is used to inform decisions.</p> <p>Some of the strategies in place are: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Engagement Strategy • An Equality and Diversity and Policy, Strategy and action plan. • A Climate Change Strategy and action plan that is monitored. • A Procurement Strategy • A Growth Strategy • A housing Strategy • An Asset Management Strategy
<p>Principle D Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p> <p>Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to</p>	<p>The priorities in the Council plan are: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To make Chesterfield a thriving Borough 2) To improve the quality of life for local people 3) To build a more resilient Council <p>The Council has a programme of change which is focused around key strategic areas. These include change initiatives focused on budget savings, housing transformation, customer services improvements and ICT improvements.</p>

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<p>ensure intended outcomes are achieved They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.</p>	<p>Service plans are built up to reflect these priorities.</p> <p>The Constitution defines the decision making mechanisms in place including Member/officer decision making protocols.</p> <p>Corporate Leadership Team managers are empowered to run their service flexibly to deliver the Council Plan priorities.</p> <p>Competency based Job Descriptions/Person Specifications for SLT/CLT increases flexibility and agility. This is being rolled out across the Council. One Council: One Team is a core CBC value which is considered during quarterly valuing individuals and performance reviews.</p> <p>All Committee reports contain various options and an officer recommendation. There is a schedule of meetings in place.</p> <p>The Council has adopted a Communications and Engagement Strategy and develops annual action plans. Feedback is given on consultation via the CBC website, social media, public meetings, and Your Chesterfield where appropriate.</p> <p>Information is dispersed internally via: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers weekly bulletin • Elected members • Aspire intranet for staff and members.

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	<p>The performance framework includes quarterly challenge at Corporate Leadership meetings and Scrutiny select committee Resilient Council. There is a 6 monthly update on progress against the Council Plan.</p> <p>There is a medium- term financial strategy in place and a savings plan both of which are regularly reviewed. Accountancy has regular budget meetings with service managers. Budgets are prepared in liaison with service managers taking in to account service plans and savings targets.</p> <p>Budget guidance and protocols are issued to all service managers. There are well established budget preparation and review procedures. Budget challenge sessions take place. This year tier 4 managers have been heavily involved in monitoring budgets and identifying saving strategies.</p> <p>In 2023 an Asset management Strategy was approved however, the Council still needs to continue to improve the way in which it manages its assets by the: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a new IT system, • Development of a 10-year maintenance plan based on condition surveys and supported by the budget (3 major condition surveys have been completed this year) • Inclusion of climate change assessments, • Disposal of assets that are no longer required.

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	<p>Whilst the IT Improvement Programme has progressed well in the 2023/24 financial year, the ever changing IT environment means that there is still work to be completed to manage the inherent risks.</p>
<p>Principle E Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the</p>	<p>The Council has adopted a competency framework to ensure that it encourages the behaviours and values expected.</p> <p>The Council has a People Plan 2019 - 23 that all managers have been made aware of. Every post has a job description and person specification.</p> <p>There are Training programmes for managers and management modules on Aspire Learning. VIP development reviews identify training requirements as does the Induction programme.</p> <p>IIP accreditation – awarded gold standard in February 2022.</p> <p>All members undergo induction training, and this is supplemented by specific training on e.g. planning, licensing, standards. Officers are encouraged to undergo relevant CPD to ensure their professional skills and knowledge maintained and updated.</p> <p>The Member development group includes learning and development programme. All staff have a learning and development plan.</p>

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<p>participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.</p>	<p>There are appropriate human resources policies in place for example: - Managing workplace Stress policy Capability Policy Managing attendance Policy</p> <p>There is VIVUP – an Employee support programme with a counselling and advice line, referral to Occupational Health. The Council has a number of mental health first aiders that have been fully trained along with webinars for managers and staff to help mental health Training on various topics available on Aspire Learning.</p> <p>There is a Corporate Health & Safety Committee</p> <p>Ongoing budget challenges and service demands increasing due to the cost of living crisis mean that the Council will need to continue to manage workforce capacity and capability to be able to deliver the Council Plan.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to develop a more corporate approach to health and safety.</p>
<p>Principle F Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures</p>	<p>There is a risk management strategy in place covering 2023 - 27.</p> <p>There is a strategic risk register that is reviewed regularly by the Risk Management Group. The Risk Management Group meets on a quarterly basis. The Risk Management Group undertakes horizon scanning to identify</p>

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<p>that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities.</p> <p>A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.</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>risks and opportunities at an early stage.</p> <p>All services have an operational risk register and these are in the process of being reviewed and updated. All committee reports include a risk section.</p> <p>Internal audit review risk management arrangements on a regular basis. The audit plan also takes in to account high risk areas and areas that are included in the corporate and service risk registers.</p> <p>The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium oversees the production of the Annual Governance Statement. The Internal Audit Consortium is resourced and maintained at a satisfactory level. An external review of internal audit took place in May 2021 and concluded that the Internal Audit Consortium was compliant with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium provides an annual audit opinion on the council’s governance, risk and control processes.</p> <p>Progress against the objectives in the Council Plan and the associated Performance targets are monitored 6 monthly.</p> <p>Scrutiny Roles and Responsibilities are defined in the Constitution. There are 2 scrutiny committees: -</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Growth and Communities • Resilient Council <p>Their role is to produce reports and recommendations which advise Cabinet, the Council or relevant Committees on policies, budget and service delivery.</p> <p>The Council is largely compliant with the CIPFA Financial Management Code There is a Medium Term Financial Plan in place. Financial Standards and guidance are adhered to. The accounts are audited by Mazars. Financial Regulations and Standing orders are within the Constitution. Variances between budget and outturn are reported to Cabinet/Council on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Managers receive monthly budget monitoring reports. The progress in achieving savings action plan is reported to SLT monthly and members as part of the quarterly budget monitoring reports to Cabinet.</p> <p>There is a current Anti-fraud Bribery and Corruption policy in place.</p> <p>The Standards and Audit Committee terms of reference are defined in the Constitution. Standards and Audit Committee members received relevant training after appointment in May 23. The Standards and Audit Committee undertake self -assessments against the CIPFA audit committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and</p>

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	<p>Police 2022 edition on an annual basis. Based on these assessments, the Committee complies with best practice.</p> <p>There is a data disposal and retention schedule covering all areas of the Council which is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>There is a data asset register and a designated Data Protection Officer (currently an external consultant).</p> <p>There are IT and Data Protection Policies in place.</p> <p>The Council has an information assurance risk register in place which details the mitigating actions and steps being taken to address issues identified.</p>
<p>Principle G Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</p> <p>Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit</p>	<p>There is an approved Communications and Engagement strategy.</p> <p>The website has been developed.</p> <p>The council newspaper “Your Chesterfield” is sent out 3 times a year.</p> <p>Achievements against priorities are communicated to the public through the media, council website, Statement of Accounts and various social media channels.</p> <p>Social media is used to report on council meetings in live time.</p> <p>The style of committee reports is specified to ensure ease of reading and</p>

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<p>contribute to effective accountability.</p>	<p>consistency.</p> <p>The annual financial statements for 2021/22 are due to be signed off by Mazars and confirm compliance with best practice. (Delay in sign off is not due to finance but to asset valuations).</p> <p>The Corporate Leadership Team are all involved in monitoring progress against the Council Plan which is reported to members.</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement is produced via a robust process that involves all of the Corporate Leadership Team. Each year an action plan is produced and monitored to address any significant weaknesses.</p> <p>The Head of the Internal Audit Consortium is CIPFA qualified and complies with the statement on the role of the Head of Internal Audit.</p> <p>An external review in May 2021 confirmed that internal audit is compliant with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. An annual internal self-assessment of internal audit also confirms compliance with the Standards.</p> <p>The implementation of internal audit recommendations is monitored by CLT and the Standards and Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Council achieved Gold Investors in people status in 2022.</p> <p>CBC is fully engaged with the Derbyshire Safeguarding boards including the</p>

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	district subgroup which challenge and share best practice amongst district authorities. There is mandatory safeguarding training for all officers.