Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	**Audit and Risk Management**	
Date:	**28 July 2025**	
Report Title:	**Local Code of Governance 2025**	

1. Purpose

1.1 To present the updated Local Code of Governance for review and approval by the Committee.

2. Issues

2.1 The Local Code of Governance sets out the principles by which the Council is governed, based on the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*.

2.2 The Local Code has been reviewed and updated to reflect current governance practices and legislative changes. It is structured around the seven core principles of good governance and demonstrates how the Council meets these standards.

2.3 The principles of good governance contained with the CIPFA Guidance on Delivering Good Governance (2016 Edition) and the 2025 Addendum update have been reflected in the AGS. The 2016 guidance outlines the following seven principles for achieving good governance and these remain unchanged in the 2025 update:

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;
- Determining the interventions necessary to achieve the intended outcomes
- Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

2.4 The Audit and Risk Management Committee has not reviewed and approved a Local Code of Governance for the Council for a significant time and a new updated Code is now presented based around the current seven principles of good governance and evidencing the governance arrangements the Council has in place. This sets out the Policy within which a framework for governance of the Council is monitored and forms part of the effectiveness review of our governance arrangements which underpins the Annual Governance Statement.

3. Recommendations

To review and endorse the new Local Code of Governance.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	N/A
Report Originator(s)	Deborah Moss – Head of Internal Audit
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director & Chief Finance Officer Deborah Moss – Head of Internal Audit
Background Paper(s)	CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government CIPFA Addendum to Good Governance in Local Government CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 FDC Local Code of Governance

Draft Local Code of Governance

2025

Author/Owner:	Monitoring Officer
Created:	July 2025
Frequency of review:	Annual
Next Review:	July 2026

Version Control:

Date updated	Summary of changes	Approved by
June 2025	Rewrite to use the CIPFA/SOLACE 7 principles.	Audit & Risk Management Committee July 2025

1. Introduction and Purpose

Good governance

Good governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

A Council's Code of Corporate Governance is: "The system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities".

The primary purpose of a corporate governance code is to guide how an organisation is directed and controlled, promoting long-term success by fostering trust, transparency, and accountability. It provides a framework for officers and elected members to make sound decisions, manage risks effectively, and balance the interests of all stakeholders.

The Code includes details of our arrangements that address areas that are core to good governance. These arrangements are essential for a corporate culture focused on achieving objectives, managing risk and fulfilling stewardship and statutory responsibilities, including best value. The Code additionally aims to provide evidence of the Council's alignment to good governance principles. Our Annual Governance Statement provides assurance that the core arrangements detailed are in place and operating effectively.

Our commitment to good governance

Fenland District Council is committed to upholding the highest possible standards of good corporate governance, believing that good governance leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources, increased public involvement and trust in the Council and ultimately good outcomes.

Good governance flows from shared values, culture and behaviour and from systems and structures. This Code of Corporate Governance is a public statement that sets out the framework through which the Council meets its commitment to good corporate governance.

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate cost-effective services.

2. Core principles of good governance of the Council are:

This local code of governance has been developed in accordance with and is consistent with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government CIPFA/SOLACE framework, which builds on the seven Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life. The Council is committed to these seven core principles of good practice and will test its governance arrangements against this framework and report annually:

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

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

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

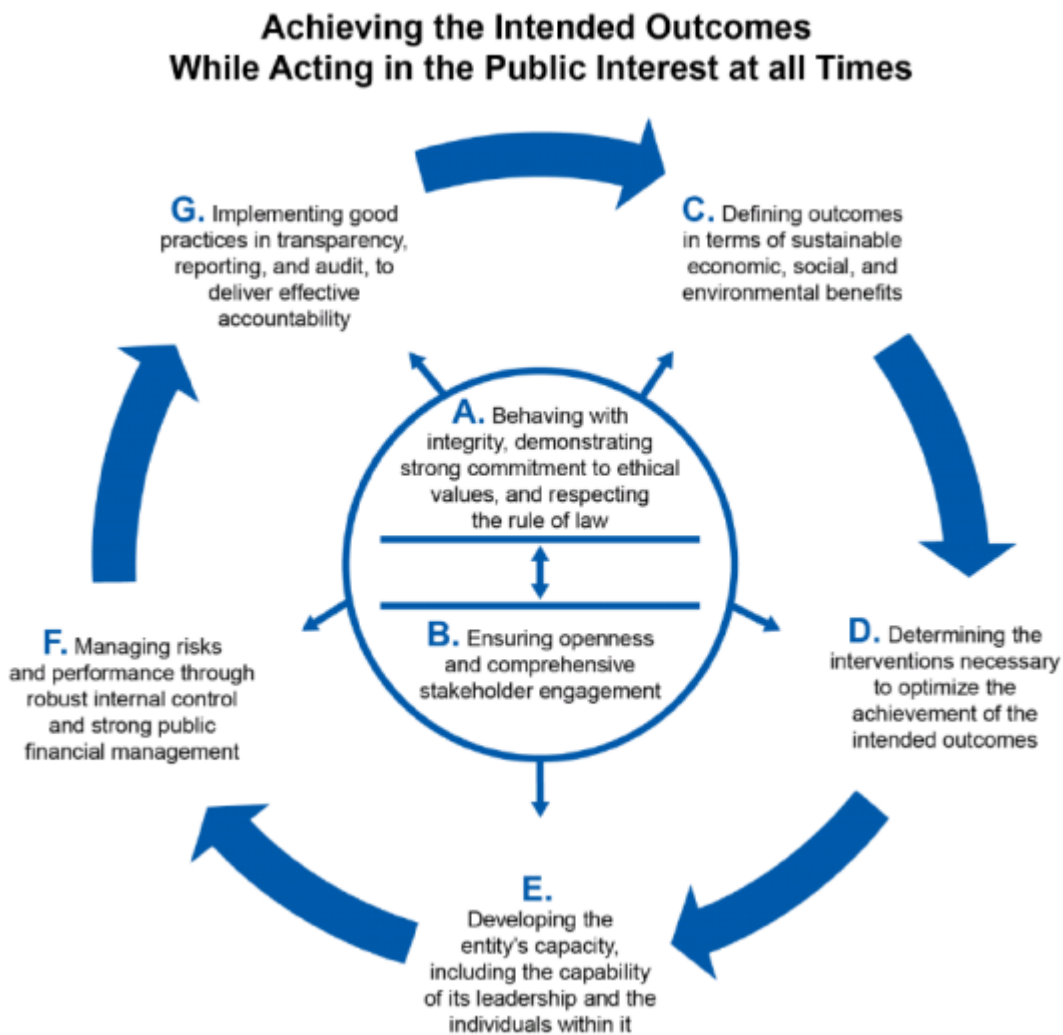**D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.**

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

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

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

3. Governance Framework

This document describes how the Council achieves the seven principles of good governance and describes how the Council's corporate governance arrangements will be monitored and reviewed.

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

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

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

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

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

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

This Code takes each of the principles of good governance and sets out the systems, processes and principles the Council has put in place to ensure good corporate governance.

The Code will be reviewed annually through the Annual Governance Statement process, which will identify the actions to be taken to enhance the code or address any limitations with in it.

Principle A – Behaving with Integrity, Demonstrating Strong Commitment to Ethical Values, And Respecting the Rule of Law

Fenland District Council commits to ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation.

Council arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
The Council expects the Authority's leadership – both Members and Officers - to create a climate of openness, support and respect and to uphold the Council's values. The Council operates within the legal framework for local councils, complying with its statutory duties and making the most of its powers to meet the needs of the District and its residents.	FDC Constitution
The Council fosters a culture of behaviour based on shared values, ethical principles and good conduct. The Council's Constitution contains Codes of Conduct for both Members and Officers to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained. The promotion of high standards of Member conduct is one of the key areas of responsibility for the Conduct Committee. Officer conduct is managed via ordinary service provisions and in accordance with approved HR Policies and Procedures. Each new employee starter receives a paper copy and is required to provide signed affirmation of reading and accepting the Code. New Members receive training on the Code of Conduct.	Constitution and its Member and employee relations protocols Member and Employee Codes of Conduct Member registration of interests Conduct Committee

The Council has a suite of frameworks and policies to support its strong commitment to ethical behaviour policies that apply equally to the roles of the member and employee. There is a procedure for ensuring these policies are reviewed and updated regularly. The Council has in place an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement and Strategy. This is the overarching document that is supplemented by other polices on Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Bribery, and Whistleblowing. A Whistleblowing Policy and arrangements are in place to enable staff to raise issues of concern and report wrongdoing. The Council has a Dignity at Work Policy to promote a responsive and consistent approach when addressing issues of bullying and harassment. A new corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (2025) aims to give people equality of opportunity and to comply with equalities legislation. This policy covers all our stakeholders including residents, employees, councillors and members of the public. We will monitor our equality actions through reporting systems and publish information each year to show how we are meeting our equalities duties.	Capability and disciplinary procedures Anti-fraud and corruption policy Whistleblowing policy Anti-money laundering policy Values statement Competency framework. Dignity at work Equality Policy Modern Slavery Social Value element in procurement Dignity at Work Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Annually published information on equality
The Council has arrangements to ensure that Members and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. All members are required to sign and registration of interest with 28 days of acceptance of office Declaration of Interests, rules for declaration. All Council meetings require a declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests that might lead to bias to be disclosed and are recorded in the minutes of meetings which are available on the Council's website. Registers of Members' interests and records of gifts and hospitality are published on the Council's website and updated annually and/or on an ad hoc basis as required.	Register of Gifts and Hospitality (Employees & Members) Register of Interests (Employees & Members)

Employees undertake mandatory anti-bribery training. Procedures are in place for employees' declaration of interests and gifts & hospitality to prevent conflicts of interest arising and maintaining integrity.	Mandatory anti-bribery training
The Council has in place an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy supplemented by further policies and procedures to mitigate the risks of bribery and corruption and money-laundering.	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy
Mandatory e-learning modules on Avoiding Bribery, a Bribery refresher and Whistleblowing exist for staff and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.	Mandatory e-learning
Induction training is provided for Members to support them in their roles at the commencement of their term of office. Throughout each subsequent municipal year, further training opportunities are presented. This is usually in connection with specific committee appointments e.g. annual planning and licensing training, periodic scrutiny, audit and conduct training. Other training opportunities are also provided via the Local Government Association and other 3rd party organisations.	Training courses undertaken by Members.
Although the council is below the statutory threshold for a Modern Slavery Statement it takes precautions where and when necessary to protect *its own direct provision of services and/or its supply chain* to identify signs and symptoms of Modern Day Slavery. This is done by being vigilant in identifying modern day slavery locally and across our supple chains.	Procurement Strategy
The Council maintains complaints processes for all types of complaint (Member conduct, public complaints, etc). An "Independent and Deputy Independent Person" are appointed to support this, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act, 2011. An Annual Complaints Report analysing complaints against the Council is published. We look for patterns and trends to see if there are common themes and what improvements can be made.	Complaints, Compliments or Comments (3Cs) procedure available on the website The 'Independent Person' in post Annual Complaints Report

The Constitution sets out delegations of the executive, committees and senior officers, and the decision-making process to be applied. It also emphasises that the Council will act within the law.	Scheme of Delegation within the Constitution
Appointment of Monitoring Officer to validate the Council is operating in a lawful manner. They are responsible to the Authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with. Their role is set out in the Constitution.	Monitoring Officer provision Role defined in the Constitution
Statutory Officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.	Professional Qualifications, Membership and CPD
The Council has a Procurement Strategy and Code of Procurement designed to meet the corporate objectives and deliver robust and fair procurement processes.	Procurement Strategy and Code of Procurement
Creation of a Corporate Governance Group of key officers to oversee assurance that the Council's governance arrangements are effective. An Audit & Risk Management Committee provides governance oversight and responsibility for internal and external audit functions.	Corporate Governance Group terms of reference and meeting records. Audit & Risk Management Committee.

Principle B: Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement

Council Arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
All Council meetings are held in public (except where information to be discussed is exempt for confidentiality). There are procedures in place which, if adhered to, permit the public to ask questions at Council and Committee meetings. The Council website has a guidance section on 'Public Participation' which details how members of the public can participate in certain council meetings. Following practical implementation during the pandemic, the Council continues to live-stream its meetings to the public and holds links to past recordings on its website for an appropriate time for viewing.	Live-streamed public meetings Council's website
All meeting agendas, content and key decision requirements are published in advance on the website, together with the calendar of upcoming meetings which is publicly available. Minutes are recorded on the website together with a record of written questions asked at Council meetings and their answers, and oral questions and answers where these are available. Records of decisions and supporting materials are available within our Modern.Gov system on our website.	Committee Agendas Committee Forward Plan Meeting Minutes including questions Record of decisions
The Council has adopted standard report templates for committee and executive reports to help ensure that readers are provided with information that is accurate, relevant, complete and unbiased. Reports make clear the options available and the risk, legal and financial implications/impacts of all decisions before those decisions are made. Templates enable the Council to ensure that its reports are clear, consistent and 'accessibility compliant' for reader ease and engagement.	Standard Committee Report Templates

The Council has a comprehensive communication plan and consultation strategy to ensure we publicise all council business and engage with a wide range of key stakeholders. These are coordinated and managed by our corporate communications team.	Communication Plan and Consultation Strategy
All news and events, and consultations are promoted via our website and social media channels (Facebook, X and LinkedIn).	Social Media
We also have an online monthly digital newsletter. All publicity and press releases are distributed to all media outlets, businesses, community groups, partner organisations, FDC members and Town and Parish Councils.	
The Council seeks to encourage engagement in its work through a variety of means including public representation on numerous Outside bodies - Fenland District Council	Council representation on outside bodies
A variety of arrangements are in place to engage with and involve other stakeholders including the business sector, health agencies, the police, district and parish councils, rural communities and voluntary and community sector.	Arrangements with external stakeholders
The Council's Corporate Business Plan publicly sets out its priorities, goals and values. A detailed Annual Report and Performance attachment outlines the delivery on progress and outcomes against the Strategic Plan which are all published on our website for public reading.	Strategic Corporate Plan Annual Report
The Council has a Consultation Strategy 2024-27 providing people who live, work, and visit the district with opportunities to: • gain greater awareness and understanding of what the Council does. • to voice their views and know how they can get involved, particularly through and alongside their elected representatives. • to have their views fed into the democratic decision-making process.	Consultation Strategy
The Council promotes its engagement with the Management, Trade Union & Staff Partnership (MTSP) for all staff and employment related matters.	Management, Trade Union & Staff Partnership
Council Open Data is published on the Council's website to include information required under the Local Government Transparency Code and Freedom of Information requests. Additionally, the Council has adopted a Publication Scheme setting out which information is published without requiring a Freedom of Information request.	Council's Open Data published on its website Publication Scheme

The Council ensures that it is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff. It makes it clear through its website the Services that it is responsible for, how people can contact the Council and the service standards they can expect.	Customer service standards
The website also offers a guidance section for those people who wish to submit a petition to the Council and states that these are welcomed, and also a section on 'Consultations' which includes both public consultations and customer satisfaction surveys undertaken.	Council website – 'Council Services', 'Petitions', 'Consultations', etc
An annual Council Tax leaflet is published on the Council's website showing how resources are deployed and the Council's accounts are scrutinised and published.	Council Tax leaflet

Principle C: Defining Outcomes in Terms of Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits

Council Arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
The Council's overall vision and priority outcomes are reflected included in the Business Plan, which is supported by a Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Transformation Programme. These are all underpinned by departmental Service Plans and wider delivery strategies.	Business Plan
A comprehensive range of community support set out by the following links: • Community - Fenland District Council • Housing - Fenland District Council including our homelessness strategy At the heart of our engagement with the voluntary and community sector is the Diverse Communities Forum, Streetpride, Golden age programme and Sports Development programme	Community support pages on website
A Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is prepared on an annual basis to demonstrate the affordability of plans and expected outcomes. A balanced budget must be prepared and is required by law. Regular monitoring takes place in year and a finance tracker is used to "track" significant changes to the agreed budget.	Medium-Term Financial Strategy
Service plans are prepared on an annual basis, demonstrating links to the Council's Business plan and delivery of key services, and performance indicators to measure their effectiveness.	Service Plans
A Treasury strategy is produced on an annual basis, demonstrating compliance with the Prudential Code and effective use of the Council's resources. Half yearly updates are reported to Full Council.	Treasury Management Strategy
A Commercial & Investment Strategy (CIS) is in place to reduce the Council's reliance on central government funding and to govern the way in which the Council pursues its investments.	Commercial and Investment Strategy
Departmental Management Teams and Cabinet Lead Members receive regular reports on the status of performance indicators and outcomes and have a process in place to address poor performance. Performance and progress against the strategies is reviewed regularly and published in the Council's Annual Delivery Report and Statement of Accounts.	Performance reports

Budget and operational performance monitoring reports are generated monthly to show achievement against published plans	
The Council has approved a Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Action Plan with the aim of minimising its environmental impact and operating in a more sustainable manner.	Carbon Reduction and Climate Adaptation Action Plan 2022
The Council is developing its new Local Plan, considering the needs of the district over the longer term and the plans that need to be put in place to deliver the necessary infrastructure to support this. The Draft Plan, consulted on in 2022, sets out the emerging policies and proposals for growth and regeneration, and the proposed sites to deliver the growth. The Local Development Scheme provides a timetable for preparation of the Local Plan. An updated Local Development Scheme dated March 2025 replaces the previous version dated February 2022. These are publicly available on our website including a Local Plan Policies Map.	Emerging Local Plan
The Council has an Economic Growth team to attract new businesses and investment to the district¡.(In.light.of.LGR.and.potential.budget.deficits.this.service.along.with.other.discretionary. areas.are.under.review¡)	Economic Growth Strategy Economic Growth Service Plan
Working alongside other local government organisations, major regeneration projects are being developed the district creating sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits.	Various regeneration projects
The Council's commitment to social value is embedded in the corporate Procurement Strategy. Ensuring social value in contracts is an important element of the Council's approach to procurement.	Procurement Strategy

Principle D: Determining The Interventions Necessary to Optimise the Achievement of the Intended Outcomes

Council Arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
The annual business planning process is used to agree the priorities for the Council. The Business Plan expresses the strategic objectives for the Council for over the current financial year and beyond. Alongside each of the objectives are detailed the outcomes to be achieved and performance measures that provide evidence that the outcomes are being delivered. This information enables members and the services contributing to the delivery of the plan to be clear about the priorities for the Council and assists in decisions about where resources should be focussed. The Business plan is prepared in conjunction with the MTFS to ensure delivery plans are affordable and achievable within the funding available.	Business Plan for the upcoming year Business Plan outcomes
Heads of Service prepare annual Service Plans detailing how they will meet objectives set in the Business Plan and setting out their priorities and work programmes for the year ahead for their Service. Within each Service Plan, measurable targets and KPIs are indicated to measure performance, and service-level risks are recorded to show how they are being controlled/managed to mitigate the risk of non-achievement of objectives.	Service Plans – including targets, KPIs and risks
Budget and operational performance monitoring reports are generated on a monthly basis to show achievement against published plans and identify where corrective actions may be needed	Budget monitoring reports
The Council has a Medium-Term Financial Strategy to resource its aspirations and to assess and plan for any financial risks.	Medium-Term Financial Strategy
Overall spending plans are set out in an annual Budget Setting report for both revenue and capital expenditure. There are arrangements in place for regular budget monitoring and the reporting of significant variances to senior management.	Budget Setting and regular Variance Reports

| Feedback and new two-tier complaints mechanisms and reporting is in place to allow quality issues to be identified. | |

Principle E: Developing The Council's Capacity, Including the Capability of Its Leadership and the Individuals within It

Council Arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
There is a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Members, other Members and Council Officers in its Constitution. The scheme of delegation within the Constitution makes clear which matters are reserved for collective decision-making by Council.	Constitution Scheme of Delegation
A Member/Officer protocol is used to aid effective communication between Officers and Members and to clarify their respective roles and appropriate ways of working. The Council's Chief Executive is its Head of Paid Service and is responsible and accountable to the authority for its operational management.	Member/Officer protocol
When representing the Council on Outside Bodies working in partnerships the Council ensures that Members are clear about their roles and responsibilities, both individually and collectively, in relation to the partnerships and to the Council and are documented though our *Outside Body Guidance.*	Outside Body Guidance
Our values provide us with a set of guiding principles, purpose and direction; to guide colleagues in what we stand for, our culture, what's important to us and how we do things. Our behaviours help us to describe in actionable terms how we do our jobs; they are relevant, actionable, achievable for all job roles within the council.	Values and Behaviours
The behaviour expected of employees is set out in the Council's competency framework and this is used as the basis for our performance appraisals. The Council has up-to-date job descriptions. It sets and monitors clear objectives for Officers through the annual performance review process. It agrees appropriate remuneration for officers based on an agreed framework of national and local agreements which include job evaluation. Regular staff surveys are undertaken to check the wellbeing of colleagues.	Performance review framework Staff "Pulse" surveys

Employees joining the Council are offered an induction programme and their training and development needs are reviewed regularly through the Council's annual performance review process.	Officer Induction Programme
Training opportunities are actively 'talked about' and encouraged for all by senior management. This includes professional training and memberships, and apprenticeships.	Training opportunities
The Council offers all new Members an induction programme and the opportunity to develop via committee specific training. The Council encourages and facilitates Members to have appropriate training or briefing before performing certain roles (eg dealing with staff recruitment or disciplinary issues, being a member of the Planning or Licensing Committees).	Member Induction Programme and ongoing training

Principle F: Managing Risks and Performance Through Robust Internal Control and Strong Public Financial Management

Council Arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
The Council has developed a Risk Management Strategy, including levels of acceptable risk appetites. The Council has a Risk Management Strategy that has enabled the monitoring of risk within projects, Service Plans, performance management, financial planning, policy setting and decision making. The Council has a balanced risk appetite that allows new ideas to be explored and encourages innovation. The Risk Management Framework enables risks to be escalated to an appropriate authority in the organisation to be managed. The Risk Management Strategy is reviewed annually by Audit and Risk Management Committee. We have Corporate and Service level risk registers which are reviewed regularly. The Corporate Risk Register is presented to audit committee on a quarterly basis for transparency and challenge. We ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Authority, with managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their role. Risk assessment is incorporated into the Council's decision making with committee reports requiring a risk consideration element.	Risk Management Strategy Corporate and service-level Risk Registers
The Council is a member of the Cambridge & Peterborough Resilience Forum, sharing knowledge and resources on Emergency Planning.	Cambridge & Peterborough Resilience Forum
Emergency and Business Continuity plans are in place to minimise disruption to services.	Emergency and Business Continuity plans
The Council has a Port Marine Safety Code to manage potential major risks related to Marine Services. It is linked to the Council's Business Continuity Plan as referenced above and is also regularly updated. A Port Management Group is responsible for monitoring and managing safety issues and a Duty Holder and Designated Person is appointed to review the safety management system and associated risks.	Port Marine Safety Code Port Management Group

Regular review and update of risk registers, including risk scoring and mitigating actions. Corporate Risk Group for oversight and governance. The Council has a Risk Management Group who are responsible for highlighting, assessing risks and applying a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status to risks for consideration by the Corporate Management Team and ultimately by the Audit and Risk Management Committee, which is done three times a year. Quarterly risk reports to the Audit & Risk Management Committee for oversight and governance.	Risk Register reviews Corporate Risk Group Quarterly risk reports to committee
The Council's Chief Financial Officer and S.151 Officer is responsible for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control. They are compliant with the CIPFA Code of Practice.	Chief Financial Officer and s.151 Officer responsibilities
Internal Audit provides a risk-based audit plan and reports on the effectiveness of risk management to the Audit and Risk Management Committee. Internal Audit also provides an annual opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control environment. This assurance is obtained from involvement with relevant governance, risk management and internal review groups and outcomes from audit reviews carried out within the year.	Risk-based Audit Plan Annual audit opinion on governance, risk and internal control.
Annual external audit of the Council's financials, including a review of value for money achieved.	External Audit VFM review
A Medium-Term Financial Strategy is produced on an annual basis and presented to Council and quarterly financial performance reporting against the approved budget is presented to Council.	Medium Term Financial Strategy Quarterly Financial Performance reports
Annual approval and reporting of the Treasury Management Strategy.	Treasury Management Strategy
Internal Audit review of services including controls within key financial systems and reporting with agreed action plans for implementation.	Audit reviews of key financial systems
Creation of a Corporate Governance Group of key officers to oversee assurance that the Council's governance arrangements are effective.	Corporate Governance Group

An Audit & Risk Management Committee provides governance oversight and responsibility for internal audit and external audit functions.	Audit & Risk Management Committee
Performance reporting is managed through a suite of key performance indicators which are reported on and discussed on a quarterly basis at Management Team meetings. Progress and performance commentaries are provided to the relevant Portfolio Holder via Briefing Reports from Services on a quarterly basis.	Corporate KPIs performance management and reporting Portfolio Holder Briefing Reports.
The Council complies with the CIPFA Code of Financial Management and has financial regulations, standing orders and authority limits in place within its financial systems.	CIPFA Code of Financial Management
The Council has an Overview & Scrutiny Committee which holds Cabinet to account for its decisions, monitors progress in corporate priorities and contributes to policy making in the Council.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee minutes

Risk registers are maintained at Service and Corporate levels to identify potential/known threats to the organisation or service, and mitigating actions put in place to reduce these.

Principle G: Implementing Good Practices in Transparency, Reporting and Audit to Delivery Effective Accountability

Council Arrangements in place to achieve this	Supporting Examples
Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and scrutinise.	Published documents on our website
Members of the public have access to information about the workings of the Council. It is made clear what information is routinely published through its Freedom of Information Publication Scheme and responds promptly to requests for information.	Publication Scheme
The Council publishes its Business Plan providing the vision, strategy and priorities for the Authority.	Business Plan and vision
The Year-end Position Report and Statement of Accounts are published providing information on plans and financial statements. These are approved by the Audit & Risk Management Committee.	Year-End Position Report Statement of Accounts
Data sets and information is published on our website in accordance with the Code of Transparency Act. Performance reports are also publicly available including demonstrating performance against KPIs.	Published Data under the Code of Transparency Performance Reports
The Council operates an independent Internal Audit function, with a risk-based audit plan, designed to test regularly that the Council's policies and processes operate in practice and that the Council complies with legislation and good practice. The Head of Internal Audit produces an opinion on the Council's internal control environment and the risk management framework to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards/Global IA Standards. The Head of Internal Audit annual opinion is used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.	Internal Audit Service Risk-based Audit Plan Head of Internal Audit Opinion Working within Audit Standards
There is an Internal Audit Charter (revised November 2023) which sets out the purpose, authority and responsibility for the internal audit function and clearly defines Members and officers' roles, responsibilities and relationship.	Internal Audit Charter

The Internal Audit Service was subject to an independent external quality assessment in 2023 with a conclusion that it 'generally conforms' to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards *(note that the PSIAS are replaced by the Global Internal Audit Standards from April 2025 and self-assessment on conformance is taking place)*.	
The Council also agrees an annual work plan with its External Auditors to test the Council's response to major legislation and the soundness of its financial and governance processes. External Audit provides an annual opinion on the Council's financial statements and arrangements. Recommendations arising from internal and external audit and inspection processes are used to inform future decision-making.	External Audit Plan External Audit Opinion Audit actions implemented
The Audit & Risk Management Committee regularly reviews their terms of reference and skills to best practice guidance. An annual report is produced to provide assurance to full Council.	Audit committee and its self-assessment ARMC Annual Report
The Council ensures audit actions are acted upon by tracking and reporting progress to the audit & risk management committee.	Agreed Audits Actions tracker
An Annual Governance Statement is prepared in accordance with CIPFA guidance and is supported by this Local Code of Governance.	Annual Governance Statement Local Code of Governance
Welcomes peer challenge, independent reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and seeks to ensure recommendations are implemented.	Reports from independent reviews and external inspection bodies
Maintain relationships with partners through a partnership governance framework.	Partnership Governance Framework
Give due recognition through its annual People Awards for outstanding achievements to teams and individuals.	People Awards for achievement and recognition

4. Monitoring and Review

The Council will undertake an annual review of its governance arrangements to ensure continuing compliance with best practice to provide assurance that corporate governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively in practice. Where reviews of the corporate governance arrangements have revealed gaps, actions will be planned to enhance the governance arrangements accordingly.

The Council will prepare an Annual Governance Statement which will be submitted to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee for consideration and will form part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.
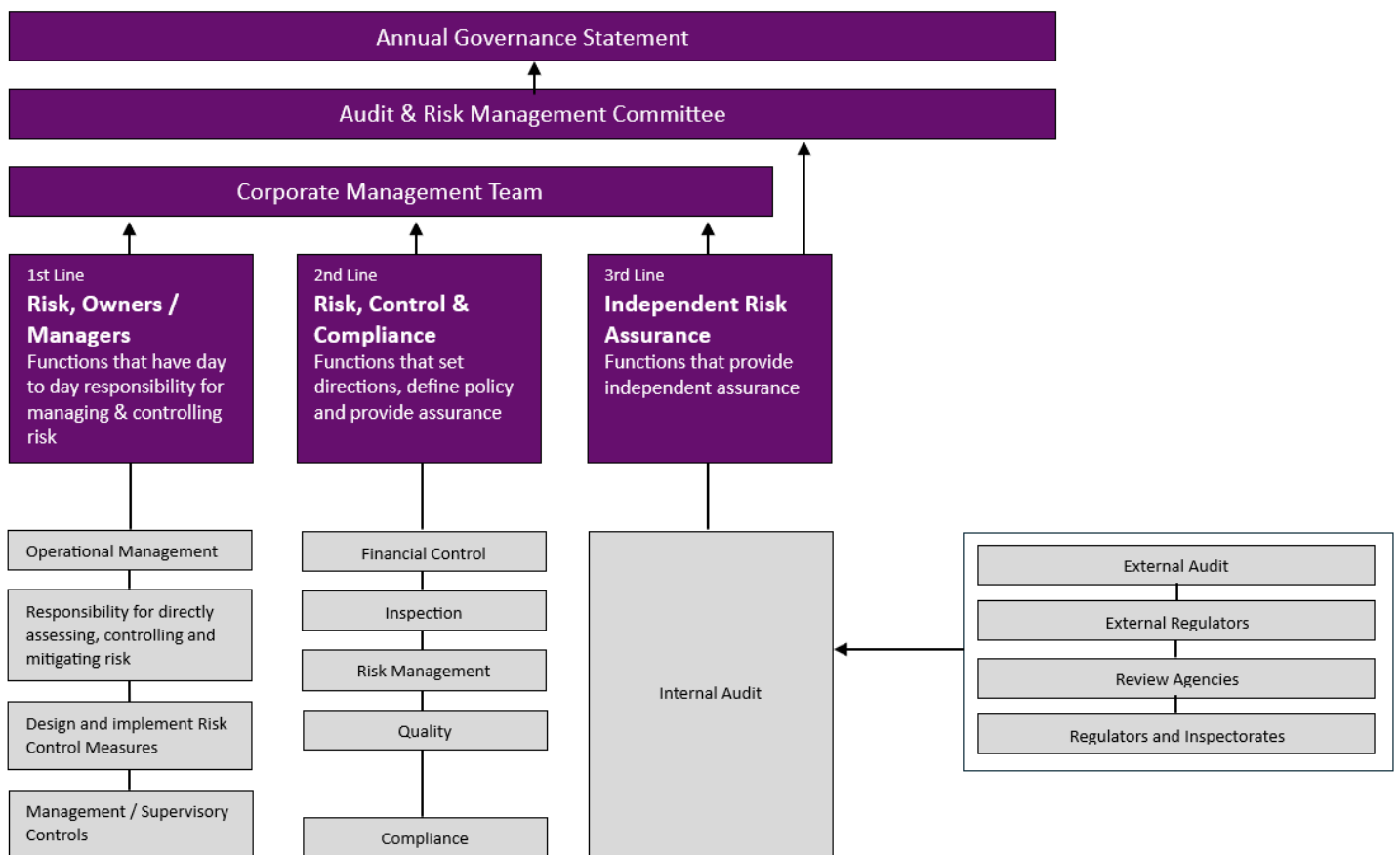
The Governance Statement will include:

• an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance (incorporating the system of internal control) and reference to the authority's code of governance

• a reference to and assessment of the effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework and the role of those responsible for the development and maintenance of the governance environment

• an opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework

• a reference to how issues raised in the previous year's annual governance statement have been progressed

• a conclusion including a commitment to monitoring implementation as part of the next annual review.

In reviewing and approving the Annual Governance Statement, Members will be provided with detailed information regarding the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and system of internal control and how these address the key risks faced by the Council. Those assurances will be available from a wide range of sources, including internal and external audit, a range of external inspectorates and senior managers from across the Council.

The Council will continually strive to operate an assurance framework, embedded into its business processes, that maps corporate objectives to risks, controls and assurances. This framework and regular reports on its application and effectiveness will provide members with assurances to support the Annual Governance Statement and will help members to identify whether corporate objectives and significant business risks are being properly managed.

The review of effectiveness is informed from various sources, both internal and external:

Annual Governance Statement

Audit & Risk Management Committee

Corporate Management Team

1st Line	2nd Line	3rd Line
Risk, Owners / Managers Functions that have day to day responsibility for managing & controlling risk	**Risk, Control & Compliance** Functions that set directions, define policy and provide assurance	**Independent Risk Assurance** Functions that provide independent assurance

1st Line	2nd Line	3rd Line	
Operational Management	Financial Control	Internal Audit	External Audit
Responsibility for directly assessing, controlling and mitigating risk	Inspection		External Regulators
Design and implement Risk Control Measures	Risk Management		Review Agencies
Management / Supervisory Controls	Quality		Regulators and Inspectorates
	Compliance		

The 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (known as 'the Nolan Principles')

These are the ethical standards expected of public officer holders.

The governance framework is supported by the seven Principles of Public Life which apply to anyone who works as a public office holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

Selflessness	Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
Integrity	Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
Objectivity	Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
Accountability	Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
Openness	Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
Honesty	Holders of public office should be truthful.
Leadership	Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.