



Code of Corporate Governance

Document Record

Release: Version 2
Date: XXXXXXXX
Author: Ian Curtis
Ownership: Resources Directorate

Document History

This code replaces the previous Code of Corporate Governance.

Document Location

A copy of the policy is available on the Fylde Borough Council web site.

The original master copy is stored on the network drive belonging to the Head of Governance.

Revision History

Date of next revision: January XXXX

Revision Date	Previous version number	Previous revision date	Summary of changes

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Audit and Standards Committee (obtained XXXXXX)

Distribution

This code requires each head of service to review arrangements within his or her own service for securing proper corporate governance and sign an assurance statement. Additionally, the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive are required to sign an Annual Governance Statement, a specimen of which is within the code and whose content will need to be informed by the assurance statement of each head of service.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council's investment and activities are focused on achieving our corporate priorities, which are:
- Value for money: Spending public money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services
 - Clean and green: Delivering services that customers expect of an excellent council
 - A vibrant economy
 - A great place to live: Making sure that Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live
 - A great place to visit: Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit
- 1.2 A sound system of corporate governance underpins the achievement of all of our strategic objectives and is considered by the council's auditors in their "Report to Those Charged With Governance".
- 1.4 In 2007 CIPFA and SOLACE issued "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework", which urged councils to:
- develop and maintain an up-to-date local code of governance consistent with the core principles set out in the Framework, including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness;
 - review their existing governance arrangements against this Framework;
 - prepare governance statements each year to report publicly on how they comply with their own codes including how effective their governance arrangements are, and on any planned changes.
- An addendum to the Framework was published in 2012.
- 1.5 This local Code of Corporate Governance shows how Fylde Borough Council will comply with the CIPFA SOLACE Framework.

2. CORE PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 These six core principles are taken from the Good Governance Standard developed by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services with support from the Office for Public Management and CIPFA and have been adapted for local government purposes. Good governance means:
- 1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
 - 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

- 3 Promoting the values of the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour
- 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- 5 Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers – including the statutory officers - also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively
- 6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

2.2 Each core principle has supporting principles which reflect the dimensions of a local authority's business. The following paragraphs show how Fylde Council will comply with those principles:

Core principle 1

Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

Supporting principles

- exercising leadership by clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users
- ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning
- ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.

To comply with these principles, we will:

- make a clear statement of our purpose and vision and use it as basis for corporate and service planning
- regularly review our vision for the borough and its impact on our governance arrangements
- meaningfully and effectively review the quality of our services and reflect this information in the Corporate Plan and medium term financial strategy in order to ensure improvement
- meaningfully and effectively measure value for money and reflect this information in performance plans and generally in reviewing our work
- make effective arrangements to deal with any failure in service delivery
- when working in partnership ensure that all partners agree a common vision of what the partnership is for. The vision should be:

- supported by clear and measurable objectives
- the driver for deciding what services will be provided by or commissioned by the partnership, the quality and the cost.

Core principle 2

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

Supporting principles

- ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority by being clear about the roles and responsibilities of each of the council's decision-making bodies, including the Audit and Standards committee.
- ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between elected members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard.
- ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other.

To comply with the above principles, we will:

- clearly state the formal roles and responsibilities of the council and each committee and how these should work in practice
- clearly state the roles and responsibilities of front line councillors, members generally and senior officers
- develop protocols to ensure effective communication between councillors and officers in their respective roles
- ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive share an understanding of their roles and objectives
- set out the allowances payable to members in a scheme and have an effective mechanism for reviewing the scheme including an independent panel
- develop our vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets through robust mechanisms, taking into account the aspirations of the local community and other key stakeholders and communicate them in a way that people can understand
- when working in partnership:
 - ensure the legal status of the partnership is clear
 - agree the roles and responsibilities of the partners so that there is effective leadership and accountability
 - make sure that all involved know the extent to which representatives of organisations can commit those organisations

- effectively monitor service delivery
- maintain an up-to date scheme of delegated powers within the Constitution
- ensure that effective management arrangements are in place at the top of the organisation
- respect and facilitate the statutory roles of the head of paid service, the officer responsible for our financial affairs (section 151 officer) and the monitoring officer.

Core principle 3

Promoting the values of the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour

Supporting Principles

- ensuring council members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that uphold high standards of conduct and exemplify effective governance
- ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.

To comply with the above principles, we will:

- work to develop trust and shared values among and between councillors and staff
- try to build mutual understanding and respect between councillors of all political groups and none
- maintain formal codes of conduct defining acceptable standards of personal behaviour
- maintain an effective Audit and Standards Committee to raise awareness and take the lead in ensuring high standards of conduct are firmly embedded within the local culture.
- ensure that decisions made by members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest
- ensure that their procedures and operations conform with proper ethical standards, both on paper and in practice
- not participate in a partnership that is not consistent with the values of the council.

Core principle 4

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

Supporting principles

- exercising leadership by being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny
- having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs
- making sure that an effective risk management system is in place
- recognising the limits of lawful action and observing both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law, but also accepting responsibility to use their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.

To comply with the above principles, we will:

- give decision-makers the up-to date accurate and understandable material that they need to make robust evidence-based decisions and record the reasons for them
- have whistle blowing arrangements to which staff and contractors have access
- put in place effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints
- develop and maintain an effective Audit and Standards Committee or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of these functions.
- comply with the law and good practice on deciding the pay of senior staff, including publishing a pay policy statement
- make sure that professional advice on legal and financial matters is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately when decisions have significant legal or financial implications
- embed risk management into our culture, so that members and managers at all levels recognise it as part of their job.
- Understand the extent and limits of our statutory powers, including the general power of competence in the Localism Act 2011
- act within the law, including observing the key principles of administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice - in our procedures and decision making
- when working in partnership, ensure that all partners have a shared understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities

- when working in partnership, ensure that there are robust procedures for scrutinising decisions

Core principle **5**

Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers - including the statutory officers - also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively.

Supporting principles

- making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles
- developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group
- encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of resources in balancing continuity and renewal.

To comply with the above principles, we will:

- develop the skills that members and officers need to effectively carry out their roles
- give the statutory officers the resources and support they need to perform effectively in their roles
- appoint suitably qualified persons to the three statutory officer posts and make sure their roles are properly understood throughout the authority
- provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and regular opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge
- continually develop skills to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed
- review the training needs of individual members and agree an action plans to meet any training or development needs
- encourage all sections of the community, contribute to and participate in our work
- consider structures for members and officers to encourage participation and development
- when working in partnership, ensure that partners individually and the partnership collectively share responsibility for appointing people to the partnership who have the required skills and are at an appropriate level.

Core principle **6**

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

Supporting principles

- taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery
- making best use of resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.

To comply with the above principles, we will:

- make clear what the council does and can do
- assess the effectiveness of relationships with partners and make any changes required
- establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively
- put in place arrangements to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands
- establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult or engage with the public and service users including a feedback mechanism for those consultees
- regularly publish information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users
- put in place effective systems to protect the rights of staff. Ensure that policies for whistle blowing which are accessible to staff and those contracting with the authority, and arrangements for the support of whistle blowers, are in place
- develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making
- ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so

- when working in partnership, ensure that engagement and consultation undertaken by the partnership is planned with regard to methodology, target audience and required outcomes. Existing mechanisms and groups should be used where appropriate. In the work cycle of the partnership it must be clear and demonstrable to the public what has happened to any feedback and what has changed as a result.

3. REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 The CIPFA SOLACE Framework requires the Council to:

- consider the extent to which it complies with the principles and requirements of good governance set out in the Framework
- identify systems, processes and documentation that provide evidence of compliance
- identify the individuals and committees responsible for monitoring and reviewing the systems, processes and documentation identified
- identify the issues that have not been addressed adequately in the authority and consider how they should be addressed
- identify the individuals who would be responsible for undertaking the actions required and plan accordingly.

3.2 The Corporate Governance Group has responsibility for overseeing a detailed self-assessment of compliance with the above core principles and supporting principles. This includes the listing of documentary evidence to support the results. Much of the required evidence is taken from the following key systems and processes:

- Strategic and business planning;
- Communication;
- Performance management;
- Risk management;
- Value for money;
- Probity;
- Financial strategy;
- Financial standing;
- Financial management;
- Asset management.

3.4 The key officers involved of the group are:

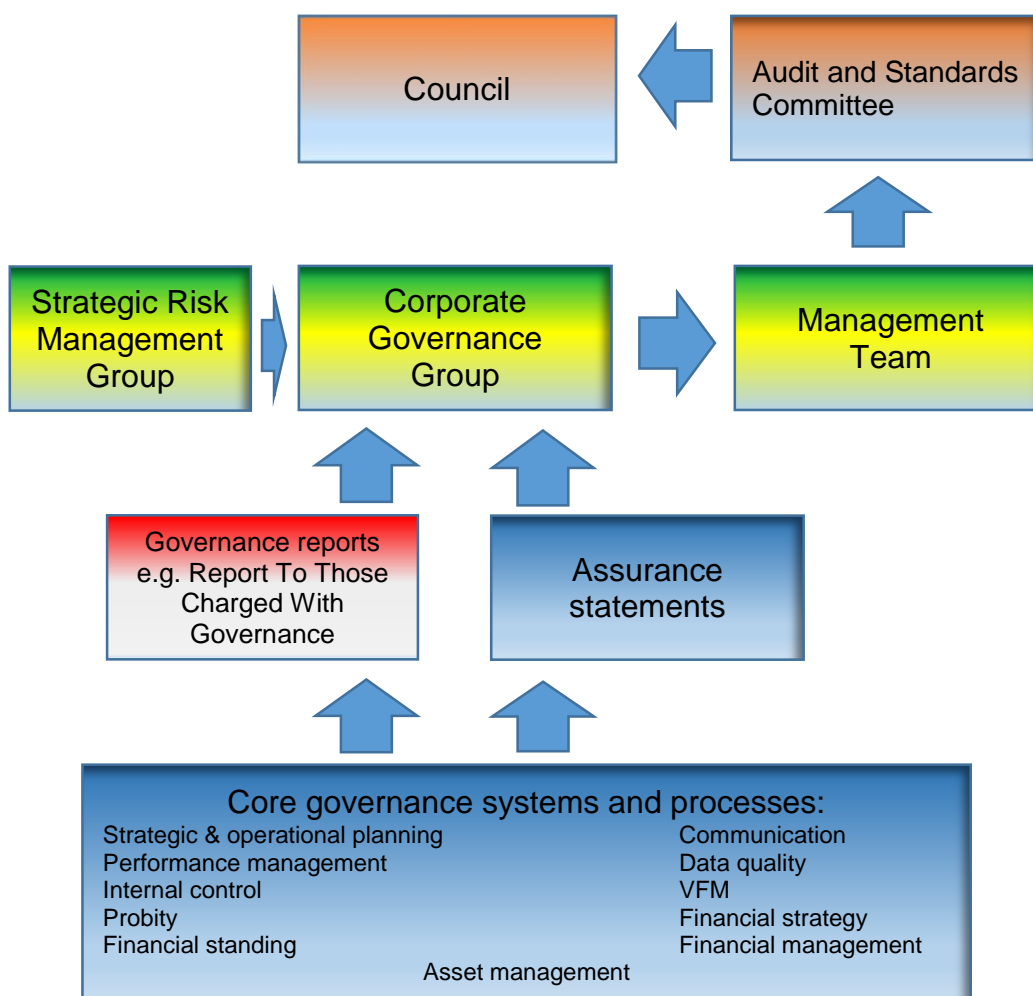
- Director of Resources (Monitoring Officer)

- Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer)
- Head of Governance
- Chief Internal Auditor

3.5 The Director of Resources has corporate responsibility for governance including oversight of compliance with the CIPFA SOLACE Framework and the process leading to the publication of the Annual Governance Statement.

3.6 Any significant non-compliance issues identified in the self-assessment process are disclosed within the Annual Governance Statement and fed into the service planning process. This means that they are subjected to systematic monitoring which in turn ensures their resolution.

3.7 The Annual Governance Statement is also reported to the Management Team is submitted to Audit and Standards Committee for approval. In addition, the Audit and Standards Committee has responsibility for oversight and scrutiny of governance matters written into its terms of reference. The overall reporting system for corporate governance is shown below. This also indicates that the Corporate Governance Group acts as a conduit for any governance issues identified through external audit and inspection reports.



4. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

- 4.1 The CIPFA SOLACE Framework defines proper practice for the form and content of a governance statement that subsumes the requirement to prepare and publish a Statement on Internal Control (SIC). Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 requires a local authority to “conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and....approve an annual governance statement, prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to internal control”.
- 4.2 The Council has therefore elected to publish an Annual Governance Statement using the CIPFA SOLACE pro forma governance statement as shown at Appendix 1, which includes the following information:
- a. an acknowledgement of responsibility internal financial control
 - b. an indication of the level of assurance that a system of internal financial control can provide
 - c. a brief description of the main features of the system of internal financial control including controls relating to group activities where the activities are significant
 - d. a brief description of the role of internal audit and the management and reporting arrangements for internal audit
 - e. Details of any other reviews informing the assessment of the effectiveness and operation of internal financial control undertaken during the year
 - f. A concise explanation of any identified significant weaknesses in the system of internal financial control, together with the actions undertaken or planned to address these
 - g. A specific statement on whether the authority’s financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010) as set out in the Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government; Framework; and, where they do not, an explanation of how they deliver the same impact.
- 4.4 The annual governance statement covers all significant corporate systems, processes and controls, spanning the whole range of the Council's activities, including in particular those designed to ensure:
- the authority’s policies are implemented in practice
 - high-quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively
 - the authority’s values and ethical standards are met
 - laws and regulations are complied with
 - required processes are adhered to

- performance statements and other published information are accurate and reliable
 - human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively
- 4.5 It therefore covers performance issues – good governance promotes good service but poor service performance reflects a failure of governance. Consequently, approval and ownership of the governance statement should be at a corporate level and should be confirmed by the most senior officer (chief executive or equivalent) and the most senior member (leader or equivalent) signing the statement on behalf of the authority.
- 4.6 The Leader and Chief Executive therefore sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of Fylde Council once the review and approval process (Appendix 1) has been followed.
- 4.7 The Annual Governance Statement will be approved by the Audit and Standards Committee by the end of June each year and published with the financial statements so that the publication timetable for the financial statements drives the governance statement approval timetable.

5. ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

- 5.1 As Section 4 above indicates, those signing the Annual Governance Statement will seek assurances that the review and approval process described in Appendix 1 has been followed. This ensures that the views of the statutory officers have been taken into account, and they have in turn sought the views of auditors (internal & external) and other inspectorates as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's system of governance.
- 5.2 However in reviewing and approving the Annual Governance Statement, members will also require assurances on the effectiveness of the governance framework from managers across the Council, as it is they who are charged with embedding corporate governance systems within their service areas.
- 5.3 The Council has therefore adopted a system of Assurance Statements (Appendix 3) which are compiled on an annual basis and approved by directors to coincide with the production of the Annual Governance Statement. These require service managers to review the operation of a wide range of governance systems and procedures within their service areas and indicate whether there are any significant non-compliance issues.
- 5.4 The Corporate Governance Group is then charged with analysing the completed Assurance Statements to ascertain whether there are any common areas of concern, and if so, whether these constitute significant governance issues. Any significant non-compliance issues emerging from the Directorate Statements will be included in the Annual Governance Statement.

APPENDIX 1

PRO-FORMA ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

Fylde Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. A copy of the code is on our website at www.fylde.gov.uk/council/your-council/governance-control/ or can be obtained from the Town Hall, St Annes Road West, St Annes. This statement explains how the council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, regulation 4, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at the Fylde Council for the year ended 31 March 200x and up to the date of approval of the annual report and statement of accounts.

The governance framework

The annual governance statement should include a brief description of the key elements of the governance framework that the authority has in place.

Review of effectiveness

Fylde Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

Briefly describe how the effectiveness of the governance framework has been evaluated.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and system of internal control by the audit committee, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Significant governance issues

Include an outline of the actions taken, or proposed, to deal with significant governance issues in relation to the authority achieving its vision.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

Signed

APPENDIX 2

GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

Fylde Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this responsibility, members and senior officers are responsible for establishing a sound system of governance.

As a service manager, I have responsibility to enforce the system of governance within my service area to ensure that it supports the achievement of the service's and therefore the Council's objectives.

When discharging my responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of governance operating within the service area, I have taken into account the following:

- The adequacy and effectiveness of management review processes;
- Outcomes from risk assessments;
- Relevant self-assessments of key service areas within the directorate;
- Relevant internal audit reports
- Outcomes from reviews by other bodies including external and statutory inspectorates and the external auditors.

I am satisfied that the attached pro-forma accurately describes the operation within my directorate of the various elements of the system of governance as set out during the financial year to 31 March 201x. I am satisfied that the system of governance as so described was overall operating effectively within my service area during that time and continues to do so.

Where the pro-forma indicates that an appropriate element of governance is not present or is not fully embedded, I propose to address those matters with a view to making them fully effective.

Signed:

Date:

Service manager for:

Element of governance			
1. Strategic planning			
1.1	A service plan for 201x/1x was prepared and managed according to corporate guidance		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
1.2	The Council's project management guidance has been applied to all the service area's key projects, including capital developments		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
1.3	All partnering arrangements have been managed in accordance with the council's arrangements for partnership working		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
2. Communication			
2.1	The service area has established feedback mechanisms to ensure that the views of service users, partners and stakeholders are taken into account		

Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
2.2	The corporate team briefing process is operating effectively within the service area		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
3. Performance and people management			
3.1	The service has monitored progress against its service plan on a quarterly basis		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
3.2	The corporate staff appraisal system has operated effectively during the year		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			

3.3	Staff personal development plans are up-to-date		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
3.4	Corporate absence management procedures are adhered to		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
3.5	The service has complied with corporate policies for staff recruitment		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
3.6	All employees comply with the Flexible Working Hours Policy (Flexitime scheme) where applicable		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			

3.6	All employees have been made aware of their general responsibilities under equalities legislation		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
4. Data quality			
4.1	The service has effective procedures for the calculation and collection of any service performance indicators		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
5. Internal control			
5.1	Agreed recommendations by relevant inspectorates, auditors and other review agencies have been implemented within the agreed timescales		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
5.2	All members of staff are aware of the council's contracts procedure rules and financial procedure rules		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable

Further information:			
6. Risk management			
6.1	An annual Directorate Operational Risk Register is compiled which complies with the requirements of the Council's Risk Management Strategy.		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
6.2	Joint risk registers have been compiled for key partnerships		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
6.3	There are up-to-date business continuity plans in place for the service, where appropriate		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
6.4	Corporate health & safety policies and procedures are being complied with		

Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
7. Value for money			
7.1	The service achieves value for money in its use of resources		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
7.2	All procurement has complied with the councils contract procedure rules and any procurement policy		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
8. Probity			
8.1	All employees are made aware of their obligations under the Officers' Code of Conduct, and are believed to be in compliance		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable

Further information:			
8.2	All employees are made aware of their obligations under the Anti-Fraud and corruption policy, and are believed to be in compliance		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
9. Financial management			
9.2	The service regularly monitors its budget		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
9.2	Purchase orders have been raised for all items of expenditure where appropriate		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			

9.3	All income is collected and expenditure is processed in accordance with corporate systems and control arrangements		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
10. Asset Management			
10.1	Asset registers or inventories have been compiled and maintained in accordance with corporate procedures		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
11. Information management			
11.1	Computer systems and data are kept secure		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
11.2	All employees are made aware of their obligations under the council's Computer Use Policy, and are believed to be in compliance		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable

Further information:			
11.3	All employees have been made aware of their general responsibilities under the data protection and freedom of information legislation, and are believed to be in compliance		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
11.4	The service complies with the council's Information Asset Governance Policy		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			
11.5	An Information Asset Owner and Information Asset Administrator has been identified for each information asset for which the service is responsible		
Fully embedded	Partially operative	Not operative	Not applicable
Further information:			

Notes to the governance assurance statement

The Council is required to publish an Annual Governance Statement alongside its financial statements which must be signed by the Leader and, Chief Executive on behalf of the council. This Statement must include any significant areas of weakness and action plans to address such weaknesses.

The requirements of the Council with regard to governance are set out in guidance published by CIPFA and SOLACE and the Corporate Governance Group are charged with conducting a detailed self-assessment of the extent to which the Council complies with this guidance.

In addition to the corporate self-assessment, assurance is also sought from service managers, as it is they who are responsible for implementing the respective governance systems and procedures within their service areas.

The Council has therefore introduced assurance statements, which need to be compiled on an annual basis to coincide with the production of the Annual Governance Statement. These require service managers to review the operation of a range of governance elements within their service areas and indicate whether there are any significant non-compliance issues.

The Corporate Governance Group will analyse the completed assurance statements to ascertain whether there are any common areas of concern, and if so, whether these constitute significant governance issues. Any significant non-compliance issues emerging from the assurance statements will be included in the Annual Governance Statement itself.

Elements of governance

The assurance statement sets out eleven strands of governance, each of which is sub-divided into separate elements. Each element relates to a specific governance related procedure or measure which should normally be in place within service areas. These are requirements laid down in a range of corporate policies and also form the basis of the annual review of governance by the Audit Commission.

How to use complete the assurance statements

Please complete the relevant part of the form for **every** element of governance by ticking the box below it. What goes in the “Further Information” box depends on what you have ticked.

If you have ticked against:

Fully embedded	Use the box to provide information in support of your claim to have embedded the element in your directorate. This may include a reference to further documentation provided by you with the form, or readily available to those who may validate the form.
Partially operative	Use the box to provide information in support of your claim that the element is partially operating in your directorate (see above), and to set out the steps you will

	take to try to fully embed the element within the next year. These steps should feed into your service plan.
Not operative	Use the box to set out the steps you will take to try to introduce and embed the element within your directorate during the next year. These steps should feed into your service plan
Not applicable	Use the box to say why you believe this element is not applicable within your directorate.