

REPORT TITLE: LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

9 JANUARY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: CLLR BECKER – CABINET MEMBER FOR  
COMMUNITY AND ENGAGEMENT

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report presents the Local Code of Corporate Governance which sets out and describes the council's commitment to corporate governance, and identifies the arrangements that have been made, and will continue to be made to ensure its effective implementation and application in all aspects of the council's work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Audit and Governance Committee approves the Local Code of Corporate Governance 2025 as set out in Appendix 1.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out the principles by which the council follows to ensure that it delivers the activities to achieve the priorities included in the Council Plan in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A Code of Corporate Governance is recommended by the guidance designated as proper practice by CIPFA/SOLACE framework, entitled Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance forms part of the governance framework which defines the principles that underpin governance at the council.

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None identified directly from the content of this report, however the seven principles that underpin the Local Code of Governance direct and control all aspects of the council's work.

### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Consultation on the content of the report has been undertaken with the members of the Executive Leadership Board (ELB).

### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 None required.

### 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 The Code of Governance reflects values and key commitments and supports the council's compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty. No direct issues arise from the content of the report, although officers will have regard to the considerations as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and whether an Equality Impact Assessment will be required to be undertaken as required on any specific recommendations or decisions made.

## 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None.

## 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Financial Exposure	n/a	n/a
Exposure to challenge	n/a	n/a
Innovation	n/a	n/a
Reputation	Good governance is essential for the effective and efficient running of the council.	Assurance is gained from the council demonstrating that it is following the principles that are set out in the Local Code
Achievement of outcome	Robust governance underpins the smooth running of the council	n/a
Property – none	n/a	n/a
Community Support – none	n/a	n/a
Timescales – none	n/a	n/a
Project capacity – none	n/a	n/a
Other - none		

## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1 Good governance for local government is about how authorities ensure they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable way.
- 11.2 The framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government organisations are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.
- 11.3 Winchester City Council is committed to the seven core principles of good corporate governance as set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) publication; Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework published in 2016.
- 11.4 CIPFA and SOLACE have not made any changes to the governance framework since this report was last presented to Audit and Governance Committee on 29 February 2024 (Report AG121 refers)
- 11.5 The Local Code of Corporate Governance, attached as Appendix 1 sets out and describes the council's commitment to corporate governance, and

identifies the arrangements that have been made, will continue to be made to ensure its effective implementation and application in all aspects of the council's work.

- 11.6 The council positively recognises and accepts the following seven core principles of good governance, as identified within the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework:
- 1) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
  - 2) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
  - 3) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
  - 4) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
  - 5) Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
  - 6) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
  - 7) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 11.7 The seven core principles each have several supporting principles, which in turn have a range of specific requirements that apply across the council's business. As there have been no changes to the seven core principles of good governance, the council is not required to make any changes to its local code of corporate governance for 2025 as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 11.8 The council accepts that to comply with the principles of good governance it must undertake to ensure that the systems and processes are continually monitored and reviewed and are kept up to date.
- 11.9 An annual review of the council's corporate governance arrangements is undertaken using the guidance in the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. The purpose of the review is to provide assurance that the governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively or to identify areas where actions the council is required to take to ensure effective governance in the future.
- 11.10 The results of the annual review take the form of the Annual Governance Statement, prepared on behalf of the Leader and Chief Executive and will be presented to a later meeting of this committee for consideration and approval.

11.11 Appendix 2 of this report provides information on the policies, procedures and arrangements that the council has in place to deliver good governance against each of the seven core principles and has been updated for 2025.

11.12 Since last year's report, in Appendix 2 minor updates have been made including the following:

- Principle 1 – has been updated to include reference to the Implementation from 1 January 2025 of the new Councillor Code of Conduct,
- Principle 2 - reference included that the council now publishes on its website details of FOI requests it receives and their response,
- Principle 3 – now includes reference to the adoption of a Green Economic Development Strategy (GEDS) that provides the framework and overall direction to influence the development of the district's economy,
- Principle 4 – deletion of the reference to the former Performance Panel,
- Principle 5 – now includes reference to the LGA led Corporate Peer Challenge that was undertaken in July 2024,
- Principle 6 – updated to include reference to the cyber security awareness training provided for all staff and members. Dedicated cyber exercise undertaken to test the council's response to a cyber incident. Further update acknowledging the streamlining of quarterly finance and performance reporting,
- Principle 7 – reference added that the council has adopted a refreshed Retention and Disposal Policy ad Schedule.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 None.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

AG121 Local Code of Corporate Governance

Other Background Documents:- None.

### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Local Code of Corporate Governance

Appendix 2 Winchester City Council – Corporate Governance Framework

## Winchester City Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance 2025

### Definition of Governance

For the purpose of this local code, Winchester City Council has accepted the definition of corporate governance as stated within the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, as follows:

**“Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.**

**It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities”.**

### Good Governance Standards

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) have published a framework document for corporate governance in local government.

Winchester City Council is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and wishes to confirm its ongoing commitment and intentions through the development, adoption and continued maintenance of a local code of corporate governance, as recommended by the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework.

This document, Winchester City Council's "Local Code of Corporate Governance" therefore sets out and describes the Council's commitment to corporate governance, and identifies the arrangements that have been made, and indeed will continue to be made, to ensure its effective implementation and application in all aspects of the Council's work.

Winchester City Council recognises that effective local government relies upon establishing and maintaining the confidence of the public in both the elected members and officers of the council.

The effective application of the seven core principles of good governance directly supports the Council's overarching priorities that have been identified for the Winchester district through the current Council Plan 2020 - 25:

- Tackling the Climate Emergency and creating a greener district
- Living well
- Homes for all
- Vibrant local economy
- Your services. Your voice

A copy of the Winchester Council Plan can be obtained through this [link](#) and provides detail on what is covered within the above five overarching priorities.

The delivery plans for achieving the priorities included in the Council Plan are set out in the corporate head of service strategic service plans.

Winchester City Council's good corporate governance standards are outlined below.

The Council has prepared an annual governance statement to evaluate its governance against the principles below:-

#### **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 1**

Winchester City Council will behave with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.

Local government authorities 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 across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

The sub principles supporting this core principle are:

##### Behaving with Integrity

- 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
- Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)
- Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions
- Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.

##### Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

- Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the council's ethical standards and performance
- Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the councils' culture and operation
- Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values

- Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Council are required to act with integrity and in compliance with the ethical standards expected by the council

Respecting the rule of the law

- Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations
- Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders, and members, are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements
- Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders
- Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively
- Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively



## **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 2**

Winchester City Council will ensure openness and 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.

The sub principles supporting this core principle are:

### Openness

- Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness
- Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided
- Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear
- Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action.

### Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

NB institutional stakeholders are the other organisations that local government needs to work with to improve services and outcomes (such as commercial partners and suppliers as well as other public or third sector organisations) or organisations to which they are accountable.

- Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably
- Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively
- Ensuring that partnerships are based on:
  - trust
  - a shared commitment to change
  - a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.

### Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

- Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is

contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes

- Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement
- Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs
- Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account
- Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity
- Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of taxpayers and service users

### **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 3**

Winchester City Council will define its outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

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 organisation'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 available.

The sub principles supporting this core principle are:

#### Defining outcomes

- Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the Council's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.
- Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer
- Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available
- Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes
- Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.

#### Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision
- Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints
- Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs
- Ensuring fair access to services.

#### **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 4**

Winchester City Council will determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of its intended outcomes.

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to 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 frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

The sub principles supporting this core principle are:

##### Determining interventions

- Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and the associated risks. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided
- Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.

##### Planning interventions

- Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets
- Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered
- Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks
- Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances
- Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured
- Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly
- Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan
- Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy

Optimising the achievement of intended outcomes

- Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints
- Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term
- Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage
- Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning, procurement and commissioning

### **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 5**

Winchester City Council will develop the organisation's capacity, and 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 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 organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

The sub principles supporting this core principle are:

#### Developing the council's capacity

- Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness
- Improving the use of resources through the appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently
- Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved
- Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources

#### Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

- Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained
- Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body
- Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority
- Developing the capabilities of elected members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:
  - ensuring elected members and staff have access to an appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and

development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged

- ensuring elected members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis.

## **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 6**

Winchester City Council will manage risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures 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 are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities. 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. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are 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 service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

The sub principles supporting this core principle are:

### Managing Risk

- Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making
- Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively
- Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated

### Managing Performance

- Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review
- Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook
- Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which provides constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible
- Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement
- Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements)



### Robust internal control

- Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives. Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis
- Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place
- Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor
- Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group/ function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:
  - provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment
  - that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon

### Managing data

- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data
- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies
- Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring

### Strong public financial management

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

## **GOOD GOVERNANCE - PRINCIPLE 7**

Winchester City Council will implement good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

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 contribute to effective accountability.

In accepting the core principle, we will:

### Implement good practice in transparency

- Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.
- Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.

### Implement good practices in reporting

- Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way
- Ensuring elected members and senior management own the results reported.
- Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the annual governance statement)
- Ensuring that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.
- Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations.

### Assurance and effective accountability

- Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.
- Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon.
- Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies

and implementing recommendations.

- Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.
- Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

**Winchester City Council – Corporate Governance Framework**

**Core Principle 1**

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

Local government authorities 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 across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
Behaving with Integrity Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values Respecting the rule of the law	<p>The constitution sets out the values and the behaviours that the council requires members and officers to adopt (5 core cultural values - we are empowering, innovative, act with integrity, adaptable, and collaborative).</p> <p>Good conduct and shared values are underpinned by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members’ Code of Conduct (Constitution Part 5.1)</li> <li>• Employee Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Protocol on member / officer relations (Constitution Part 5.2)</li> <li>• Gifts and hospitality register</li> <li>• Register of Interests</li> </ul> <p>Implemented from 1 January 2025 the new Councillor Code of Conduct</p> <p>Developed and promotes a culture of behaviour based on shared values and high ethical principles and good conduct.</p>

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
	<p>Provides a comprehensive induction programme for all new employees and councillors informed by the cultural values of the organisation.</p> <p>Has in place approved arrangements for dealing with complaints that allege a councillor has breached the code of conduct (Constitution Part 5.3).</p> <p>Has a standards committee which is not politically biased, with responsibility for considering investigation reports in respect of Code of Conduct complaints that are referred to the Monitoring Officer as required by the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Is able to monitor and investigate officer behaviour through its corporate practices and Disciplinary Procedure.</p> <p>Protects individuals making complaints through Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing policy.</p> <p>Manages an updated member register of interests and publishes this on the council's website.</p> <p>Maintains a register of gifts and hospitality to safeguard both members and officers against conflicts of interest and is regularly reported to Audit &amp; Governance Committee.</p> <p>Has an audit committee with overall responsibility for governance and audit functions.</p> <p>Clearly defined roles and responsibilities between the Head of Paid Service, S151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Implements a Data Management policy if there is a breach and clear responsible officer.</p> <p>Complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 for the procuring of goods, works and services (Procurement &amp; Contract Management Strategy 2020 – 2025). This strategy is based around the guiding principles of value, compliance, environment and social, and fairness.</p>



## Core Principle 2

### Ensure openness and 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.

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
<p>Openness</p> <p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</p> <p>Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</p>	<p>The council's constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures and codes of conduct that are followed.</p> <p>Public records (e.g. committee reports) provide clear reasoning and evidence for decision making and are clear about the criteria and rationale used.</p> <p>Publishes FOI requests and their response on its website.</p> <p>Council plan commitment to Listening Better highlights value of using both formal and informal consultation and engagement techniques to inform decision making.</p> <p>WCC website includes links to all open and upcoming council public consultations. Consultations conducted online (with alternative formats available) to allow diverse pool of residents to provide feedback.</p> <p>Undertook a residents' survey in 2024 that sought the views and opinions of the council and its services. Statistically valid using stratified random sampling to ensure views were inclusive of demographics of the district and went on to inform the draft council plan 2025-30 priorities.</p> <p>Tenant Satisfaction Survey results published on website to demonstrate tangible actions as a result of formal consultation.</p> <p>Guidelines to allow public participation in committee meetings available on website along with calendar of upcoming meetings and option to view livestreams via YouTube.</p> <p>Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used effectively and outcomes achieved efficiently, ensuring that partnerships are based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• A shared commitment to change</li> </ul>

<b>CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles</b>	<b>Evidence that the council complies with these requirements</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="837 272 1816 300">• A culture that promotes the value added from partnership arrangements</li></ul> <p data-bbox="786 339 1935 403">Committee decision reports provide clear reasoning and evidence for decisions and how they support the priorities set out in the council plan.</p> <p data-bbox="786 440 1951 504">Decisions the council makes are supported by evidence base outlined in documents such as Equality Impact Assessment.</p>



### Core Principle 3

#### Winchester City Council will define its outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

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 organisation’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 available.

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
<p>Defining outcomes</p> <p>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	<p>Council Plan 2020–25 sets out a clear vision and priorities for the council and the outcomes that it wants to achieve. Captured and monitored through performance indicators and the council’s performance management framework. Refreshed annually to ensure fit for purpose and aligns to evidence-based priority areas informed by the Residents’ Survey. Monitors delivery of the objectives set out in the Council Plan through quarterly reports to member Performance Panel and The Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Annual departmental business plans provide the detail on how the council will deliver the priorities in the Council Plan.</p> <p>Has properly developed and maintained financial management arrangements which include approving a balanced budget before the start of each financial year, together with a Medium Financial Strategy which looks four years in advance and an annual statement of accounts that details the council’s financial position in the previous year.</p> <p>Regularly reviews risks at a corporate and operational level and ensures that appropriate plans are in place to manage or mitigate risks as far as possible.</p> <p>Has arrangements in place to publish the external auditors report which includes a formal conclusion on whether the council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p> <p>Complies with Rules of Procedures as set out in the Constitution including Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement and Contract Management Strategy.</p>

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
	<p>Contract Management Framework is in place to ensure a consistent approach to Contract Management across the organisation, proportionate to the risk associated with a contract. This includes consideration of social and environmental matters as a key value.</p> <p>Internal audit regularly reviews the risk and internal control framework and produces an annual report including audit opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of risk management, governance, and control.</p> <p>Undertakes Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate and proportionate to identify how the needs of particular vulnerable groups have been considered to inform decision making.</p> <p>Ensures that that sustainability of the environment is at the heart of all decision making within the council.</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the financial outcome for the council.</p> <p>Has declared a Climate Emergency and has an approved Climate Neutrality Action Plan to deliver sustainable and environmental benefits to deliver the commitment for the council to be carbon neutral by 2024 and the Winchester district by 2030.</p> <p>Adoption of a Green Economic Development Strategy (GEDS) that provides the framework and overall direction to influence the development of the district's economy.</p>

#### **Core Principle 4**

**Winchester City Council will determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of its intended outcomes.**

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to 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 frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
<p>Determining interventions</p> <p>Planning interventions</p> <p>Optimising the achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<p>Ensures that reports to cabinet and cabinet Member Decision Days include an analysis of alternative options together with the reasons for the recommendations contained within the report.</p> <p>Requires annual business plans to be aligned with Council Plan priorities.</p> <p>Performance is reported to and monitored by the Executive Leadership Board, cabinet and scrutinised by The Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The council's budget is developed to reflect the council's priorities, and the council has a clear financial strategy including a Medium-Term Financial Plan which contains realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure - budgets, plans and objectives which are aligned.</p> <p>Requires reports and therefore decisions to be considered with legal and financial implications and to be signed off on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer (S151) and the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Has a project management framework in place, including business case development that is approved before a project can commence.</p> <p>Approved risk management framework in place to ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the council.</p> <p>Implements the requirements of the financial management code to support sound practice in financial management and demonstrate financial resilience and sustainability.</p> <p>Ensures that bids for external funding comply with the financial regulations and meet council priorities.</p> <p>Arrangements in place to seek and respond to the views of the community. Standard committee report template includes details of consultation and engagement undertaken before every decision.</p>

## Core Principle 5

**Winchester City Council will develop the organisation’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 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 organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
<p>Developing the council’s capacity</p> <p>Developing the capacity of the entity’s leadership and other individuals</p>	<p>Comprehensive member induction training programme.</p> <p>Staff learning and development plans updated annually and dedicated corporate employee training budget supported by corporate Learning and Development Policy.</p> <p>Performance and development reviews are undertaken for all members of staff at least annually. The process offers the opportunity to discuss performance and to identify any training and development needs, with a mid-year appraisal procedure to track progress.</p> <p>Operates a robust recruitment and selection process and Capability Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>HR policies and procedures are in place and available to all employees on the intranet that ensure arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce, including that of members. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted and rolled out Flexible Working Policy across the organisation.</li> <li>• Comprehensive Employee Wellbeing Policy</li> </ul>

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides access to occupational health arrangements and counselling services, under an employee assistance programme to promote well-being and ensure that sickness is maintained at a minimum.</li> </ul> <p>Clearly sets out roles and responsibilities of the Leader and Chief Executive within the constitution.</p> <p>Undertook a LGA led Corporate Peer Challenge in July 2024</p> <p>Clearly sets out roles and responsibilities of senior members of staff and statutory officers in the constitution, including role descriptions and job specifications.</p> <p>Has a Scheme of Delegation to Officers in the constitution (Part 3.4).</p> <p>Requires members of the planning and licensing committees to undergo mandatory training prior to sitting on these committees.</p> <p>Regular senior managers' meeting, all managers' meeting and all staff briefings.</p> <p>Refreshed Public Sector Equality Duty (adopted in January 2022) and established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum. Currently working towards the standards as set out in the Equality Framework for Local Government.</p>

## **Core Principle 6**

**Winchester City Council will manage risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.**

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures 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 are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities. 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. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are 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 service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
<p>Managing Risk Managing Performance Robust internal control Managing Data Strong public financial management</p>	<p><b>Risk Management Policy</b> The Risk Management Policy sets out the council's arrangements for managing, allocating and reporting risk and is integrated into the work of internal audit to provide a holistic approach to assurance aligned to corporate priorities.</p> <p><b>Business Continuity Framework</b> Business continuity plans are in place for business-critical services and reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>Cyber security awareness training for all staff and members and dedicated cyber exercise undertaken to test the council's response.</p> <p><b>Quarterly Performance reports</b> Introduction of an updated quarterly finance and performance report that is presents information in a streamlined format that clearly and concisely sets out the relevant information showing the progress this council is making in achieving the priorities in the Council Plan.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committee reviews quarterly performance reports that provide an update on progress against the Council Plan priorities. The Scrutiny Committee minutes are forwarded and approved by Cabinet.</p> <p><b>Internal audit service</b> Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) provide an internal audit service and provide the Audit and Governance Committee with a quarterly update on progress against the Internal Audit Plan. Annual Internal Audit Plan developed in consultation with senior managers input before approval by Audit and Governance Committee. An annual opinion is also reported to the Audit &amp; Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee which can report to full council if it considers necessary.</p> <p><b>Updated and adopted Retention and Disposal Policy and schedule</b> Ensures that the council manages its data and information and not retained for longer than is required.</p> <p><b>Anti-fraud, corruption and whistleblowing policy</b></p>



CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
	<p><b>Anti-bribery policy</b></p> <p><b>Financial Management</b> Through the S151 Officer, members are advised on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves set within the budget process.</p> <p>Ensures that effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of statutory officer roles by defining roles in the constitution and ensuring an adequate budget.</p> <p>Ensures compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures and that expenditure is lawful by requiring all reports to be considered by legal and finance and considered by the Executive Leadership Board prior to consideration by cabinet.</p> <p>Financial management arrangements in place which confirm with the requirements of the CIPFA statement on the role of Chief Financial officer in local governance and statutory provisions on the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.</p> <p>Has in place Financial and Contract Procedure Rules.</p> <p>Has robust arrangements in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing data</li> <li>• Training staff and members in relation to information governance</li> <li>• Ensuring data security breaches are reported and dealt with appropriately as set out in the Information Security Policy</li> <li>• Ensuring appropriate information sharing agreements are in place.</li> </ul> <p>Has in place measures to respond to GDPR and Data Protection Act requirements, including a Data Protection Officer.</p> <p>Quarterly risk management reporting to Audit &amp; Governance committee</p> <p>Has adopted a Privacy Policy and publishes a clear privacy statement on its website setting out what personal data is collected and how it will be used.</p> <p>Has a project management framework with full business case development.</p> <p>External Audit of accounts and value for money opinion</p>

<b>CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles</b>	<b>Evidence that the council complies with these requirements</b>
	S151 officer appointed. Quarterly Finance & Performance report

## Core Principle 7

### Winchester City Council will implement good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

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 contribute to effective accountability

CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles	Evidence that the council complies with these requirements
<p>Implement good practice in transparency Assurance and effective accountability Managing data Strong public financial management</p>	<p>Through an updated Retention and Disposal Policy and Schedule, ensures that the council manages its data and information and that it is not retained for longer than is required.</p> <p>Has in place measures to respond to the GDPR and Data Protection Act requirements, including appointing a Data Protection Officer.</p> <p>Monitors compliance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and Access to Information Act and has a nominated officer in each team to respond to FOI requests and where applicable, refer to the Data Protection Officer</p> <p>Operates under executive arrangements with an established overview and scrutiny committee.</p> <p>Adopts a presumption of openness and transparency and publishes key decisions on the council website.</p> <p>Has adopted a process for the review of exempt committee reports within 12 months of the decision being made and publishing without restriction all papers used to support decisions on projects and other major financial transactions that were marked as exempt from publication at the time of the decision unless Full Council decides the papers should remain exempt for a further 12 months.</p> <p>Decisions are reviewed by external auditors, internal audit, and Executive Leadership Board to ensure that value for money is achieved and to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.</p>

<b>CIPFA/SOLACE supporting principles</b>	<b>Evidence that the council complies with these requirements</b>
	<p>Has an effective corporate complaints system which is managed through Customer Services. Stage 2 complaints are monitored and evaluated by the Executive Leadership Board. Complaints policy and procedure published on council website.</p> <p>Ensures that all agendas, reports, and minutes are published on the council's website in accordance with statutory timescales. These are provided in alternative formats upon request.</p> <p>Agendas, reports, and minutes are published via the free Modern.Gov app to help strike the balance between transparency demands and making information easy to access and understand.</p> <p>The Chief Executive is responsible and accountable for all aspects of operational management.</p> <p>Records in the minutes of the proceedings of a "budget decision meeting" of council the names of the members who voted or abstained.</p>