

The Code of Governance

Wrexham County Borough Council

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SECTION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- 1.1 Corporate Governance refers to the processes by which organisations such as the Council are directed, controlled, led and held to account. It is also about culture and values - the way that councillors (members) and employees think and act. In summary, if management is about running the Council, corporate governance is about seeing that it is run properly.
- 1.2 The Council is a complex organisation which affects all who live and work in Wrexham and businesses and organisations that are based here. It is therefore essential that there is confidence in our corporate governance, and the Council must therefore ensure that:
 - as a democratic body, we engage with and account to our citizens and stakeholders effectively;
 - we conduct our business in accordance with the law and to proper standards;
 - public money is properly accounted for and is used economically, efficiently and effectively;
 - controls are proportionate to risk so as not to impede performance;
 - we continuously improve the way in which we function, in terms of effectiveness, quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability and innovation; and
 - we fulfil our purpose and meet our priorities as set out in the Council Plan
- 1.3 **The Council is therefore committed to good corporate governance** – to doing the right things in the right way for the right people in a way which is timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable. This Code sets out that commitment and how we evidence it.
- 1.4 **This commitment includes improving governance** on a continuing basis across the Council as a whole, through a process of evaluation and review. This is detailed further in Section 4.

SECTION 2: THE BASIS OF THIS CODE

2.1 This Code is based on 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016', issued jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), this is provided to all UK local authorities which are centred on **seven Core Principles (A – G)** from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/International Federation of Accountants, 2014). This is designed to underpin the governance arrangements of all public sector bodies.

2.2 The Core Principles are:

A

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

B

B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

C

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

D

D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes.

E

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

F

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

G

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

- 2.3 Core Principles A and B are fundamental to the application of all principles. Good governance is dynamic and requires all of the principles to be met.
- 2.4 Since effective Corporate Governance relies on the way that councillors (members) and employees think and act, the Code also recognises the importance of the seven 'Principles of Public Life' (the 'Nolan Principles'), which are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders – Appendix A. These support the seven Core Principles of this Code which in turn underpin the Council's approach to planning fair, effective and sustainable services and its responsibilities for sustainable development as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

SECTION 3: COMMITMENTS TO GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES



Principle A:

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

The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also for how we use the resources under our stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes we have achieved. In addition, we 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, we can demonstrate the appropriateness of all our actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

To support Principle A, the Council is committed to:

Behaving with integrity

- A1. 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 Council.
- A2. Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the Council and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the 'Nolan Principles' See Appendix A).
- A3. Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions.
- A4. 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.

What is in place to support this

- Agreed Values
- Organisation Development and Workforce Strategy
- Codes of Conduct for members and employees
- Registers of interests, gifts and hospitality
- Induction training for members and employees
- Employee Handbook
- Constitution
- Statutory Section 151 Officer and Monitoring officer roles
- Regular governance awareness raising for employees
- Members self-regulatory protocol (Constitution)
- Members' remuneration scheme
- Financial procedure rules
- Contract procedure rules
- Planning Code of Practice
- Standing Orders
- Standards and Audit Committees
- Counter Fraud Policy & Procedures
- Anti-Money Laundering Strategy
- Whistleblowing Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Internal Audit Charter
- Safeguarding Responsibilities
- Health and Safety Policy
- Strategic Equality Plan and Community Cohesion Plan

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

- A5. Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the Council's ethical standards and performance.
- A6. Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Council's culture and operation.
- A7. Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.
- A8. Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Council are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the Council.

What is in place to support this

- Agreed Values
- Organisation Development and Workforce Strategy
- Codes of Conduct for members and employees
- Registers of interests, gifts and hospitality
- Financial procedure rules
- Contract procedure rules
- Planning Code of Practice
- Induction training & mandatory e-learning training modules for members and employees
- Annual PRCD's includes behavioural competencies
- Employee Handbook
- Regular governance awareness raising for employees
- Sustainable Development Planning Principles
- Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy
- Partnership & collaborative working arrangements

Respecting the rule of law

- A9. Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.
- A10. 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.
- A11. Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.
- A12. Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.
- A13. Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

What is in place to support this

- Compliance with the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- Key Statutory Officer responsibilities set out in the Council's constitution
- Compliance with CIPFA Statement of the 'Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government')
- Protocol on Member/Officer relations (Constitution)
- Job Descriptions
- Regular governance awareness raising for employees
- Standards Committee
- Audit Committee
- Counter Fraud Policy & Procedures
- Anti-Money Laundering Strategy
- Whistleblowing Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- General Data Protection regulation guidance.
- Welsh Language standards



Principle B:

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Local government is run for the public good, and 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.

To support Principle B, the Council is committed to:

Openness

- B1. Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating our commitment to openness.
- B2. 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.
- B3. 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.
- B4. Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action.

What is in place to support this

- Constitution (Article 12)
- Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Whistleblowing Procedure.
- Council Plan
- Well-Being statement
- 'Performance Management Framework' .
- External audit and inspection reports
- Council Scheme of Published Information.
- Online Council Tax information
- Forward Work Programmes for committees and Council
- Reporting and publishing & distribution timetables
- Delegation of Powers Scheme
- All Council Meetings are open to the public unless exempt under Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)'
- Minutes
- Webcasting of meetings via Wrexham Council internet
- 'Your Voice Wrexham' (Wrexham Council and partners' online consultation tool).
- Codes of Conduct for members and employees
- External communications strategy
- Freedom of Information requests and Subject Access Requests

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

- B5. 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.
- B6. Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively
- B7. Ensuring that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change and a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.

What is in place to support this

- Involvement Strategy
- Current consultations
- Complaints Procedure
- Wrexham Public Services Board & Well-being Plan
- Partnership & collaborative working arrangements

Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users

- B8. A clear policy on the type of issues that the Council will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.
- B9. Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.
- B10. Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.
- B11. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.
- B12. Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.
- B13. Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and service users.

What is in place to support this

- Involvement Strategy
- Customer Access Standards
- Employee & Trade Union engagement, internal communications strategy
- Wrexham Public Services Board & Well-being Plan
- Medium Term Financial Plan (consulted on annually)
- Council Plan Priorities (includes budget considerations) consultation exercises
- Sustainable Development Planning Principles
- Complaints Procedure (and compliments)
- Welsh Language Standards



Principle C:

Defining 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 authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

To support Principle C, the Council is committed to:

Defining outcomes

- C1. Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the Council's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the Council's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.
- C2. 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.
- C3. Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.
- C4. Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes.
- C5. Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.

What is in place to support this

- Sustainable Development Planning Principles (ways of working)
- Wellbeing assessment & statement
- Council Plan priorities development
- Involvement Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Performance Management Framework
- Half-yearly performance reports to the Executive Board
- Risk Management Policy

Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- C6. Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision.
- C7. Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the Council's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.
- C8. 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.
- C9. Ensuring fair access to services.

What is in place to support this

- Council Plan Wellbeing statement
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Budget consultation exercises
- Risk Management Policy
- Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy
- Member workshops
- Project Management Handbook
- Wrexham Public Services Board & Well-being Plan
- Strategic Equality Plan and annual Cohesion plan
- Equality Impact Assessments throughout the decision making processes
- ICT & Digital Strategy and customer standards



Principle D:

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

To support Principle D, the Council is committed to:

Determining necessary interventions

- D1. Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided.
- D2. 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.

What is in place to support this

- Council Plan
- Decision making principles (Constitution)
- Reporting requirements for Full Council and Executive Board
- Project Management Handbook
- Scrutiny committees and support
- Risk Management Policy
- Involvement Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Senior Management Structure
- External Audit Inspections
- Internal Audit Annual programme
- Customer Complaints process

Planning interventions

- D3. Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets.
- D4. Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.
- D5. Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks.
- D6. Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances.
- D7. Establishing appropriate local performance indicators (as well as relevant statutory or other national performance indicators) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured.
- D8. Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.
- D9. Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium-term financial plan.
- D10. Informing medium and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.

What is in place to support this

- Council Plan
- Reporting, publishing & distribution of performance monitoring timetables
- Involvement Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Wrexham Public Services Board & Well-being Plan
- Partnership & collaborative working arrangements
- Half-yearly performance reports to the Executive Board
- Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules
- Budget Monitoring & Control Procedures
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Senior Management Structure
- Corporate Performance Framework Guidance & data quality process

Optimising the achievement of intended outcomes

- D11. Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.
- D12. Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.
- D13. 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.

What is in place to support this

- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Council Plan Priorities development (includes budget considerations) consultation exercises
- Budget risk assessment



Principle E:

Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole.

Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity.

To support Principle E, the Council is committed to:

Developing Capacity

- E1. Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.
- E2. Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.
- E3. Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the Council's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.
- E4. Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.

What is in place to support this

- Scrutiny committees and support
- Senior Management Structure
- External audit and inspection reports
- Partnership & collaborative working arrangements
- Organisation Development and Workforce Strategy
- Corporate Land and Buildings Strategy
- Internal Audit Annual Programme
- ICT & Digital strategy

Developing the capability of the leadership and other individuals

- E5. 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.
- E6. Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body.
- E7. Ensuring the leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure, whereby the chief executive leads the authority 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.
- E8. Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the Council to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:
- ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged,
 - ensuring 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,
 - ensuring personal, organisation and system-wide development through shared learning, including,
 - lessons learnt from both internal and external governance weaknesses
- E9. Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation
- E10. Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.
- E11. Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs.
- E12. Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.

What is in place to support this

- Constitution (especially Articles 2 & 11)
- Protocol on Member/Officer relations (Constitution)
- Regular meetings between Strategic Leadership Team and Lead Members
- Delegation of Powers Scheme
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Learning and Development function
- Coaching
- Democratic Services Committee, Democratic Services Officer and Member Development Programme
- Performance Review and Development Process
- Involvement Strategy
- Organisation Development and Workforce Strategy
- Workforce Policies
- Code of Conduct for employees
- Internal Communication
- Health and Safety Policy & current action plan (if applicable)
- Corporate Health Standard
- Code of conduct for members
- Induction programme and mandatory e-learning training
- Peer Reviews
- Member and workforce health & wellbeing programmes
- School leadership support, includes school leadership and development of governors.



Principle F:

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

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.

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 is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

To support Principle F, the Council is committed to:

Managing Risk

- F1. Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making.
- F2. Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring they are working effectively.
- F3. Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.

What is in place to support this

- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Arrangements, Risk and Control Registers and Internal / External audit coverage of risk management
- Half-yearly risk performance reports to Governance & Audit Committee
- Governance & Audit Committee
- Project Management Handbook
- Partnership and Collaborative Working arrangements
- Reporting requirements for Full Council and Executive Board
- Service Continuity and Emergency Planning arrangements
- Council Plan Priority Boards having oversight of risks relevant to their areas each quarter

Managing Performance

- F4. Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post-implementation review.
- F5. Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the Council's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.
- F6. Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made, thereby enhancing the Council's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.
- F7. Providing members and senior management with regular reports on progress towards outcome achievement.
- F8. Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post-implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).

What is in place to support this

- Council Plan
- Performance Management Framework
- Service Plans and service planning guidance
- Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy
- Half-yearly performance reports to the Executive Board
- Forward Work Programmes
- Reporting, publishing & distribution of performance management timetables
- Scrutiny committees and support
- Report preparation guidance
- Committee report screening and sign off processes)
- Democratic Services Committee, Democratic Services Officer and Member Development
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules
- Budget Monitoring & Control Procedures
- Budget setting processes
- Annual Statement of Accounts

Robust Internal Control

- F9. Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives.
- F10. Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis.
- F11. Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place.
- F12. Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.
- F13. Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or 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.

What is in place to support this

- Risk Management Policy
- Half-yearly risk performance reports to Governance & Audit & Committee
- Council Plan Priority Boards having oversight of risks relevant to their areas each quarter
- Heads of Departments Internal Control Assurance Statements
- Internal Audit Charter (including Annual Plan)
- Governance & Audit Committee Terms of Reference (Constitution)
- Governance & Audit Committee effectiveness surveys and training
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Counter Fraud Policy & Procedures
- Anti-Money Laundering Strategy
- Annual Governance Statement & Action Plan
- Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report
- Governance & Audit Committee Chair's Annual Report to Council
- Scrutiny function
- Governance Officer Group Terms of Reference

Managing Data

- F14. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data.
- F15. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.
- F16. Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.

What is in place to support this

- General Data Protection Regulation guidance
- Freedom of Information guidance
- Information Management Strategy and Action Plan
- Acceptable Use of ICT Facilities
- ICT Security Policy and Guidelines
- Secure Data Transfer Standards and Procedures
- Information Security Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Corporate Records Retention Scheme

Strong public financial management

- F17. Ensuring financial management supports both long-term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.
- F18. Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.

What is in place to support this

- Budget monitoring
- Compliance with CIPFA codes and guidance
- Annual Governance Statement
- External Audit reports
- Performance Management Framework
- Risk and Control Registers
- Medium term financial plan



Principle G:

Implementing 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.

To support Principle G, the Council is committed to:

Implementing good practice in transparency

- G1. Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.
- G2. 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.

What is in place to support this

- Report preparation guidance
- Committee report screening and sign off processes
- Accessible website
- Performance Management Framework

Implementing good practice in reporting

- G3. Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of resources.
- G4. Ensuring owners and senior management own the results.
- G5. Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (annual governance statement).
- G6. Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.
- G7. 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.

What is in place to support this

- Performance Management Framework
- Internal management reporting
- Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk and Control Registers
- Annual Statement of Accounts
- Head of Internal Audit annual Value for Money report
- Annual Self-Assessment

Assurance and effective accountability

- G8. Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.
- G9. Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon.
- G10. Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.
- G11. Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.
- G12. Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

What is in place to support this

- Governance & Audit Committee Terms of Reference (Constitution)
- External audit and inspection reports
- Internal Audit Charter
- Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report
- Internal Audit self-assessment and compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- Chief Officer Internal Control Assurances
- Schools Governance Declarations
- Wrexham Public Services Board & Well-being Plan
- Partnership and collaborative working arrangements

SECTION 4: HOW CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IS REVIEWED

1. The Leader and Chief Executive are required to ensure that each year, a review is undertaken to measure the extent to which the Council as a whole has met the requirements of this Code.
2. The results of the review are included in the Annual Governance Statement which is published with the Annual Statement of Accounts.
3. Where the review reveals possible gaps or weaknesses, action is agreed to ensure effective governance in future. Agreed action is monitored for implementation.
4. Where necessary, this Code will be amended as a result of the annual review, changes in best practice or statutory changes. Minor amendments to wording, titles and to details of 'what is in place' to support the principles (Section 3 above) may be approved by the Head of Service Performance Improvement & Partnerships (PIPS) but any substantive changes to the Code and the principles will require Executive Board approval.
5. This code will be renewed no later than 31 March 2027.

APPENDIX A: THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE (THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES)

These apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. Reference Committee on Standards in Public Life, published 31 May 1995. These standards are:

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

This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the:

- Civil Service
- Local Government
- Police
- Courts and Probation Services
- Non-departmental public bodies
- Health, Education, Social and Care services.

For more details, see: [The 7 principles of public life - GOV.UK](#)