Local Code of Corporate Governance

June 2020

**LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

Introduction

Angus Council is committed to achieving good standards of corporate governance. The Local Code of Corporate Governance describes how we intend to achieve this.

The Local Code was first adopted in 2002 and has been regularly reviewed and updated. In developing the current Local Code, we have considered best practice and guidance, in particular the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* published in April 2016 and the accompanying Scottish guidance notes published in November 2016. The overall aim of the Framework is to ensure that:

- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities
- there is sound and inclusive decision making
- there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.

Delivering Good Governance

Governance refers to the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.
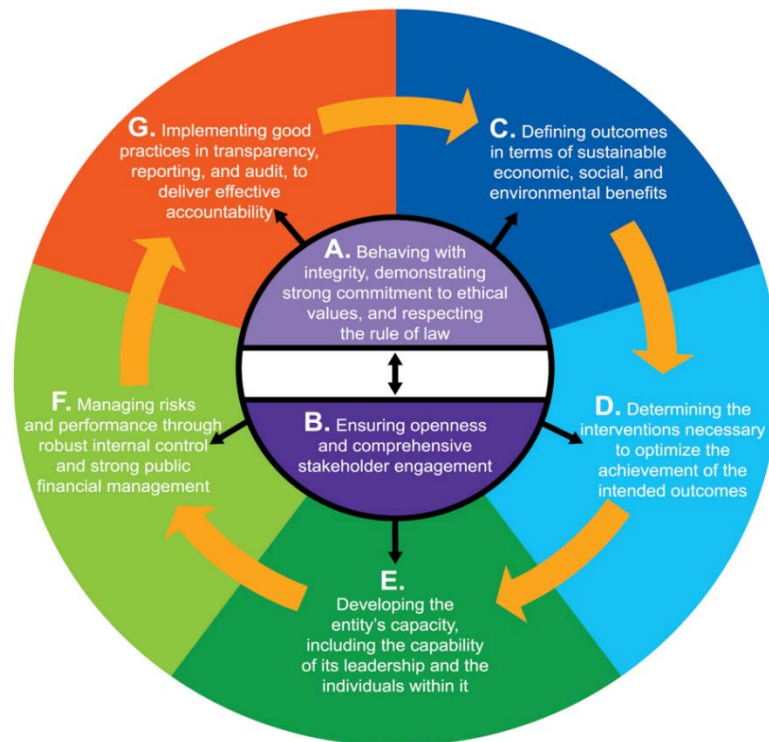
Delivering Good Governance sets out seven core principles for good governance:

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

The information on pages 4 to 10 sets out the key policies, procedures and structures which demonstrate Angus Council's compliance with these core principles.

Annual Review

Compliance with the seven core principles for good governance will be assessed on an annual basis by the Corporate Governance Officers Group (CGOG) on behalf of the Chief Executive. CGOG members are Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform (Chair), Director of Finance, Director of Legal & Democratic Services, Service Leader Governance & Change, Manager Support Services Schools & Learning and Performance Analyst, Governance & Change.

The Service Leader Internal Audit attends in an advisory capacity.

The results of the CGOG assessment will be reported to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and the Scrutiny & Audit Committee. The report will incorporate recommendations for additions and/or improvements to the Council's governance arrangements, to reflect any changes in the way in which the council does business or new legislation.

CGOG's assessment of compliance will be reflected in an Annual Governance Statement which will be submitted to the June meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee. The statement will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for inclusion in the council's annual accounts.

The Annual Governance Statement will also be informed by the Service Leader Internal Audit's independent review of the Council's risk management processes, systems of internal control and corporate governance processes.

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

- Employee Code of Conduct, Councillor Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Members of Angus Integration Joint Board. These codes include registers of interest of which the Councillors register is published on the councils website and Gifts and Hospitality.

- Job Specific Professional Codes of Conduct – There are jobs in the council that require the officers to operate in accordance with a professional code of conduct as well as the Councils.

- Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation.

- Statutory Officer roles, Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance (Section 95) Officer, Monitoring Officer, Chief Social Work Officer to ensure compliance with regulations and law.

- Counter Fraud Framework – this was revised during 2018/19 and approved by the Policy & Resources Committee (Report 363/18). The Whistleblowing Policy was updated July 2019.

- Financial Regulations

- An Updated Council Plan was approved by Council in February 2020. The Council Plan 2019-2024 sets out the council's vision and values.

- Complaints Handling Procedure. Scrutiny & Audit committee receive regular reports on complaints received and lessons learned.

- A corporate safety, health and wellbeing policy statement is in place and has been brought to the attention of all staff.

- Elected Member induction and training.

- Staff induction and training – All staff are required to undergo mandatory Data Protection e-learning annually and this is monitored and reported to the Director or Legal & Democratic Services.

- Annual Performance & Development Reviews (previously known as Appraisals) for all staff.

Core Principle B
Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- A refreshed Community Plan 2017 – 2030 was approved by the Community Planning board in May 2019. This is reviewed annually and is a statutory responsibility. This work links to the Fairer Scotland duty.

- The Council's Strategic Plans, including the Council Plan 2019-2024, Finance & Change Plan 2019-24 and Workforce Plan 2019-24, were agreed by the Council in February 2020 as part of the budget setting process.

- 'Have Your Say' section of the website includes details of current and completed consultations and has information on the Citizens Panel and 'other ways to get involved'.

- The Citizens Survey was undertaken in early 2020 and is based on a series of questions developed in 2015, providing a good baseline.

- Council and Committee meetings are held in public. Agendas, reports and minutes are available on the website. A small number of matters are considered in private for legal or confidentiality reasons.

- Angus Community Planning Partnership information can be accessed from the council website.

- Angus Health & Social Care Partnership information can be accessed from the council website, including Integration Joint Board agendas, reports and minutes.

- Information in relation to AngusAlive and Tayside Contracts, who are also key strategic partners delivering services in our communities, can be accessed from their websites.

- Customer Care Standards are publicised on the council website. A review of the Customer Care Service Strategy is currently in progress and the revised strategy will be in place during 2020.

- The council has adopted the Scottish Information Commissioner's model publication scheme. Information is available on the council website. Guidance on Freedom of Information is also available.

- Individual services consult with stakeholders on service changes or significant new projects.

- The vision for the council's digital services is that they become so good that people will prefer to use them rather than alternative channels. Recent developments have expanded our online offering and improved the efficiency of our back-office processes (R129/19 Sch2, Overview of Strategic Digital Activity).

- An Open Data website was launched during 2016/17.

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

- A refreshed Community Plan 2017–2030 was approved by the Community Planning board in May 2019. This is reviewed annually and is a statutory responsibility.

- The Council Plan 2019-2024 was agreed by the Council in February 2019.

- Procurement strategy and policies including Sustainable Procurement Policy.

- The Change Programme is directly aligned with the Community Plan, Locality Plans and Council Plan. The most recent Change Programme update is in report 397/19.

- The Fairer Scotland Duty is a crucial policy instrument to make decision making more accountable. An integrated assessment, combining Equality Impact and Fairer Scotland requirements, is being developed in Angus.

- Equalities Mainstreaming report 2019.

Core Principle D
Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- Angus has four Locality Implementation Partnerships and Locality Plans which cover the whole county. These give everyone the opportunity to get involved in shaping their own community.

- Medium term budget/ financial strategy subject to regular review (Report 288/19).

- Council Plan 2019-2024, Finance & Change Plan and Workforce Plan 2020

- The Council Plan Annual Performance Report 2018-19, Community Plan 2017-2030, and IJB Performance Data were submitted to the Early 2020 meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit committee.

- AngusAlive's Annual Reports was submitted to the June 2020 meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit committee.

- Briefing and development sessions for elected members.

- Use of business case and options appraisal.

- Change programme and governance arrangements. The most recent Change Programme update is in report 397/19.

- Digital Strategy

- A self-evaluation culture is being refreshed and extended across the council, using the 'How Good Is Our Council' framework. This also forms part of a broader Performance Led (PLED) programme which all services are involved to make better use of our performance data to support improvement activity and related outcomes.

- The Council Plan includes performance measures related to achieving strategic outcomes. Progress is reported monthly to CLT and annually via the Public Performance Reporting process.

- Performance data from service areas is being refreshed and aligned to identify how it contributes to achieving the strategic outcomes.

- The Pentana performance management system is being refreshed to ensure that performance information is recorded in a purposeful and consistent manner across the organisation.

- Performance information published on council website.

- Budget setting process and final budget volume.

- Regular revenue and capital monitoring reports to the Policy & Resources Committee and to Communities Committee for HRA.

- The Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families 2017-2020 published in April 2017 focuses on reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for all of Tayside's children.

- The Angus Joint Child Poverty Local Action Plan website.

- Parent Forums in each of the Angus localities.

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

- Benchmarking. Performance pages on the council website include links to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

- A Workforce Plan 2019-2024 was approved in February 2020.

- Elected Members Learning & Development Programme.

- Annual Performance & Development Reviews (PDRs) for all staff. PDRs include individual staff development plans and actions are monitored on Pentana. These are currently under review.

- Induction programmes for elected members and staff.

- Corporate Leadership Team and Leaders/Cabinet meetings.

- Change forum to support the development of organisational capability to deliver improvement and change.

- Leadership Forum, Senior Leaders Forum and Middle Leaders Forum.

- Leadership development programme

- Staff training programme

- E-learning modules to support staff development.

- Mentor Me Scheme.

- Modern Apprenticeship, Graduate Apprenticeship and Angus Works programmes.

- Corporate training policy and budget to support staff development aligned with business needs.

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

- Risk Management Strategy reviewed during 2018/19 and approved by the Policy & Resources committee in January 2019. (R27/19).

- During 2019/20, the Risk, Resilience & Safety team reviewed and development the Councils approach to Risk Management. Training has taken place for Chief Officer with further training to take place for Elected Members and staff.

- The Council's updated Corporate Risk Register, along with a new Risk Management Step by Step Guide and Detailed Reference Guide were considered and agreed by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in January 2020 (Report 15/20).

- All services are involved in the Council Performance Led (PLED) programme starting with Performance indicators review and Self Evaluation. Both Appraisals and Risk are also involved by reviewing the current practices. In March 2020, this programme was put on hold due to the ongoing Global Pandemic COVID-19 and will be restarted as part of recovery planning. Performance information published on the council website, including links to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

- Financial Implications and Risks included in committee reports.

- Financial Regulations. Updated March 2018 to reflect new management structure.

- Counter-fraud framework. The Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Fraud Response Plan and Whistleblowing Policy were revised during 2018/19 and approved by the Policy & Resources committee (report 363/18). Reports on counter-fraud activity are submitted to the Scrutiny & Audit committee.

- An Annual Governance Statement is included in the council's Annual Report and Accounts.

- The Information Governance Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the development of and compliance with the council's information governance policies and procedures. These are available to staff on the council intranet. The Steering Group also oversees implementation of the Information Governance Improvement Plan.

- The council's Records Management Plan was approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland in March 2017. A Progress Update Review self-assessment was submitted to the Keeper in September 2018.

- Medium Term Budget Strategy for 2019/20 published in September 2019 (Report 288/19).

- Finance & Change Plan agreed by the Council in February 2020.

- Data Protection and FOI compliance.

- Internal Audit and External Audit reports are considered by the Scrutiny & Audit committee.

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

- Council and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are published on the website except where reports are restricted for legal or confidentiality reasons.

- [Annual Accounts](#) for the Council and the Integration Joint Board published on the council website. Annual accounts for AngusAlive, Tayside Contracts and Tayside Valuation Joint Board can be accessed from their websites.

- [Council Plan – Annual Performance Report 2017-2018.](#)

- [Community Plan – annual report 2017-2018.](#)

- Scrutiny & Audit is a standing committee of the council. Its remit and membership are defined in [Standing Orders](#). The remit was reviewed and updated in April 2019 (report [120/19](#)). The Leader and Depute Leader of the Council are not permitted to be members of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee.

- The council's Internal Audit service operates in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. An external quality assessment is required every 5 years, with the outcome reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee.

- The Scrutiny & Audit Committee approves the annual internal audit plan and receives regular update reports.

- External Audit's annual audit plan is submitted to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee for review and comment.

- External Auditor's Report submitted to elected members and Controller of Audit covering Council's governance, finances and performance.

- Accounts Commission [Best Value audit report](#), published October 2016.

- Budget monitoring reports to management and to Policy & Resources Committee.

- The Scrutiny & Audit Committee Self Assessment was schedule for March 2020 but due to COVID-19 was postponed. A report on the Action Plan from 2019 progress will be submitted in June 2020.

- Scrutiny panel reviews are initiated where members of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee identify there may be benefit to scrutinise more closely an area of work/ activity which may help deliver improvement to current approaches (e.g. recent Scrutiny panel work for re-introduction of parking charges).