Angus Council

Comhairle Aonghais

Local Code of Corporate Governance

June 2021

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.
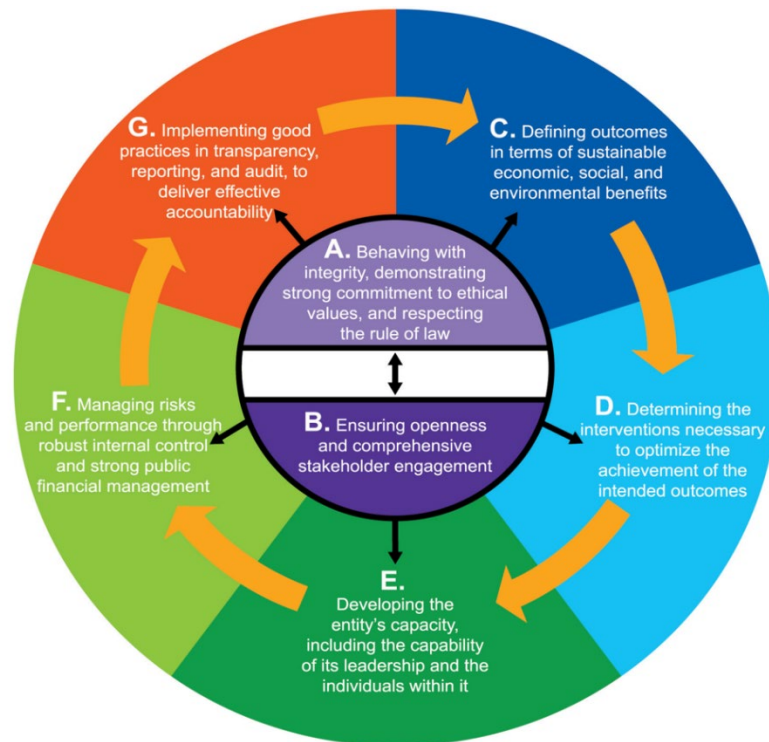
Delivering Good Governance sets out seven core principles for good governance:

  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 following pages set out the key policies, procedures and structures which demonstrate Angus Council's compliance with these core principles. A table is also included at the end which summarises the evidence supporting the Council compliance with the requirements of the framework, providing a link where this is available.

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 Education and Lifelong 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 Council's 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 Council's.

- Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation. A member/ Officer Working Group (MOWG) has been established to review and update the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation.

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering the democratic process and other operational functions of the Council through the appropriate use of technology, including 'virtual' Council and Committee meetings.

- 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). A self-assessment against CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption was undertaken and reported to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee in June 2020 (Report 159/20).

- The Whistleblowing Policy was updated July 2019. A specific Whistleblowing Policy for the Angus IJB is being developed for implementation during 2021.

- Financial Regulations

- An Updated Council Plan was approved by Council in March 2021. 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 new complaints handling system and process has been implemented during 2020/21.

- Freedom of Information (FOI) procedure. A new FOI system has been implemented during 2020/21.

- A corporate safety, health and wellbeing policy statement is in place and has been brought to the attention of all staff. Further health & wellbeing information has been added to the council's intranet as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 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. The course is updated annually to reflect areas requiring greater focus.

- Annual staff Governance Reminder – All staff are required to review the content of the Governance Reminder which is now available on the digital 'Always Learning' platform.

- Annual Performance & Development Reviews (previously known as Appraisals) are undertaken 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.

- Fairer Scotland Duty assessments considering socio-economic matters are undertaken in relation to the implementation of proposed new or updated policies and strategies to support Council decision-making.

- The Council's Strategic Plans, including the Council Plan 2019-2024, Finance & Change Plan and Workforce Plan 2020, were agreed by the Council in March 2021 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 published online and is based on a series of questions developed in 2017, providing a good baseline.

- Council and Committee meetings are held in public or, as required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, using 'virtual' technology which is also recorded to provide the public with access to the content of the meetings. Agendas, reports and minutes are available on the website. A small number of matters are considered in private for legal or confidentiality reasons in accordance with the relevant legislation.

- 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. Information in relation to the Tayside Valuation Joint Board, who are also part of the Council's group accounts, can also be accessed from their website.

- Customer Care Standards are publicised on the Council website. A review of the Customer Care Service Strategy is currently in progress. The development of the

revised strategy has been delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 and the target for completion is now 31 March 2022.

- 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 at the time when these are being considered.

- 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 (R96/21 App1, Overview of Strategic Digital Activity).

- An Open Data website was launched during 2016/17. It may be possible to extend the use of this as part of the development of the Council's Big Data Strategy which will create opportunities make greater use of data to support change and improvement.

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 March 2021. This now includes the Council's Strategy on a Page as our key purpose statement to help to guide our thinking and what we do over the medium to long term.

- 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 132/21, Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

- 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 now in place and training is being delivered across the organisation.

- Equalities Mainstreaming report update in 2021. (Report TBC/21, Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3, Appendix 4).

- The full Tay Cities Region Deal was signed on 17 December 2020. Components of the deal will be delivered in Angus, including the £26.5m Angus Fund which is an initial investment in the ambitious £1bn Mercury Programme.

- A BREXIT officers' group has been established to consider the impact, risk and opportunities arising from BREXIT on Council priorities and outcomes.

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 annual review (Report 74/21) and long term financial strategy under development.

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

- The Council Plan Annual Performance Report 2019-20, Community Plan 2017-30 Annual Performance Report 2019/2020, and IJB Performance Data.

- AngusAlive's Annual Report for 2019/20 was submitted to the March 2021 meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Committee.

- Briefing and development sessions for elected members.

- The Council's Change Programme has a defined project 'life-cycle', together with a suite of template documents and associated guidance to ensure that a consistent approach to project management is applied, including the use of business case and options appraisal where required. Further guidance on options appraisal is in development for implementation during 2021.

- Change programme and governance arrangements. The most recent Change Programme update is in Report 132/21, Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

- Digital Strategy

- Our 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 in to make better use of our performance data to support improvement activity and related outcomes. This programme was paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 and was re-launched in February 2021.

- The Council Plan includes performance measures related to achieving strategic outcomes. Targets have also been included in the 2021 update. Progress is reported monthly to CLT and annually via the Public Performance Reporting process.

- The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Report which sets out the performance of Council services is used to inform improvements to service delivery. The most recent version was reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in June 2021 (Report 183/21).

- 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](#) is published on Council website.

- Budget setting process and final budget volumes (revenue and capital).

- 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 2020-2023](#) 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 (LGBF).

- The [Workforce Plan 2019-2024](#) was updated and approved in March 2021.

- 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. The approach to these is currently being reviewed to link more closely with our values.

- 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, Middle Leaders Forum and First level Leaders Forum (introduced during 2020).

- 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 Bi-Annual Review commenced in March 2021. This will be reviewed by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee during 2021 and approval will thereafter be requested at the next available Policy & Resources Committee.

- The Risk, Resilience & Safety team keep under regular review the Councils approach to Risk Management. Training was held with the Corporate Leadership Team in January 2020. The planned roll out was suspended in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Training was restarted on 19 January 2021 with Directors and Service Leaders.

- The Council's updated Corporate Risk Register, was considered by the Scrutiny & Audit Committee in January 2021 (Report 13/21).

- Risk Management Short user guide and Full guidance was updated in March 2020.

- Separate dashboards and risk registers are in place for the Council's ongoing response to COVID-19. Risks are included as standing agenda items and identified by the Gold and Silver Incident Management Teams. Risks are reviewed at each meeting.

- All services are involved in the Council's Performance Led (PLED) programme starting with Performance indicators review and Self Evaluation. Performance & Development Reviews (PDRs) 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 was re-launched in February 2021. Performance information published on the council website, including links to the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF).

- Financial Implications and Risks included in committee reports.

- Financial Regulations.

- 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. A specific Whistleblowing Policy for the Angus IJB is being developed for implementation during 2021.

- 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 November 2020 and approved in January 2021.

- Medium Term Budget Strategy for 2022/23 to 2023/24 and development of longer-term financial strategy published in March 2021 ([Report 74/21](#)).

- [Finance & Change Plan](#) agreed by the Council in March 2021.

- 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 2019-2024](#)

- Community Plan – [Annual Report 2019-2020](#)

- 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 Annual 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. A further Best Value audit of the Council will be undertaken by Audit Scotland in the near future.

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

- The latest Scrutiny & Audit Committee Self-Assessment was carried out in April 2021 and a report with the Action Plan is reported to the committee thereafter.

- 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.

Local Code of Corporate Governance Evidence Matrix

Principle	A			B			C		D			E			F				G			
Evidence	A.1	A.2	A.3	B.1	B.2	B.3	C.1	C.2	D.1	D.2	D.3	E.1	E.2	E.3	F.1	F.2	F.3	F.4	G.1	G.2	G.3	Last Reviewed
AHSCP Website				✓	✓	✓																
Angus Community Planning Partnership				✓	✓	✓																
Angus Localities Parent Forums									✓	✓	✓											
AngusAlive				✓	✓	✓																
AngusAlive Annual Report									✓	✓	✓											Mar-21
Annual Accounts																			✓	✓	✓	
Annual Governance Statement															✓	✓	✓	✓				Nov-20
Annual Performance & Development Reviews	✓	✓	✓									✓	✓	✓								Under Review
Annual Performance Report									✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	
Accounts Commission Best Value																			✓	✓	✓	Oct-16
Budget Monitoring & Setting Process									✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	
Business Case and Options Appraisal									✓	✓	✓											
Best Value Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Change Programme							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Citizen Survey				✓	✓	✓																2020
Community Improvement Plan									✓	✓	✓											
Community Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓											✓	✓	✓	Feb-20
Complaints Handling Procedure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓											

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Corporate Leadership Team & Leaders / Cabinet Meetings												✓	✓	✓								
Corporate Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy	✓	✓	✓																			
Corporate Training Policy & Budget												✓	✓	✓								
Council & Committee Meetings				✓	✓	✓													✓	✓	✓	
Council Plan	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	Mar-21
Councillor Code of Conduct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																2011
Counter Fraud Framework	✓	✓	✓												✓	✓	✓	✓				Sep-18
Customer Care Standards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																Under Review
Digital Strategy				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓											2021
Elected Members Induction and Training	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Employee Code of Conduct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																2010
Equalities Mainstreaming Report								✓	✓													
External Audit															✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fairer Scotland Duty								✓	✓													
Financial & Change Plan				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓											Mar-21
Financial Regulations	✓	✓	✓												✓	✓	✓	✓				Mar-18
Freedom of Information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																
HGIOC Self Evaluation									✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓				
IJB Strategic Progress & Performance Report									✓	✓	✓											
Information Governance															✓	✓	✓	✓				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Date
Internal Audit																✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Leadership Development Programme													✓	✓	✓									
Locality Implementation Partnership										✓	✓	✓												
Locality Plans										✓	✓	✓												
Manager/Leadership Forums													✓	✓	✓									
Members of IJB Code of Conduct	✓	✓	✓																					
Open Data Website				✓	✓	✓																		
Performance Led Programme										✓	✓	✓												
Performance Website										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Procurement Strategy and Policies							✓	✓																
Project Consultation				✓	✓	✓																		
Records Management Plan																✓	✓	✓	✓					
Reducing Child Poverty										✓	✓	✓												
Risk Management Strategy																✓	✓	✓	✓					Jan-19
Scheme of Delegation	✓	✓	✓																					
Scrutiny & Audit Committee	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Staff Induction and Training	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓	✓									
Standing Orders	✓	✓	✓																					Dec-20
Statutory Officers Roles	✓	✓	✓																					
Tayside Contracts				✓	✓	✓																		

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families									✓	✓	✓								
[Whistleblowing Policy](#)	✓	✓	✓												✓	✓	✓	✓	Jul-19
[Workforce Plan](#)				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					Mar-21