

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Accounts and Audit Committee
Date: 27 June 2013
Report for: Information / Comments
Report of: Audit and Assurance Manager

Report Title

Draft Annual Governance Statement – 2012/13

Summary

This reports sets out the Draft 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which has been reviewed, both by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and a sub-group of the Accounts and Audit Committee.

The sub-group of the Accounts and Audit Committee - Chair (Cllr Whetton), Vice Chair (Cllr Mrs Evans) and Opposition Spokesperson (Cllr Brotherton) - were given delegated responsibility by the Committee to review the robustness of the draft AGS which, when finalised in September 2013, will accompany the 2012/13 Statement of Accounts. The Group was also provided with the revised updated Corporate Governance Code for review.

The group considered the robustness of the process followed in gathering assurances and evidence on which the AGS was based. The Committee received a number of reports / updates on the process and progress against it throughout the 2012/13 year. The group also considered the content of the AGS and discussed supporting evidence and content with the Audit and Assurance Manager. The group provided feedback to agree the content of the AGS and were satisfied with the process followed.

The updated Corporate Governance Code was also considered by the sub-group and it was noted that this is to be presented for Executive approval prior to being publicly issued alongside the 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement. It was noted that some amendments have been made to update the existing Code which was previously updated and approved by CMT and the Accounts and Audit Committee in 2012. This is to make reference to updated guidance by CIPFA and to include a further section (see section 7), in line with good practice, providing further detail in respect of governance arrangements expected to be in place as part of the Council's Code.

The content of the Draft AGS and the Corporate Governance Code has been reviewed and agreed by CMT. This has included agreeing significant governance issues detailed in the AGS, progress against which will be monitored through the year.

The final version of the AGS will take into account any feedback or further developments through June to September 2013 (e.g. External audit and internal audit review work) and will be presented to the Accounts and Audit Committee

in September 2013 to accompany the Council's Accounts. This version will be signed by the Chief Executive and Leader.

Recommendation

The Sub group of the Accounts and Audit Committee, given delegated responsibility to review the robustness of the 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement, are :

- (a) Satisfied with the robustness of the process followed in generating the Statement.**
- (b) Satisfied that the Statement itself is robust; and**
- (c) Agree that the updated Corporate Governance Code is submitted for Executive approval.**

Note – the final version of the Annual Governance Statement, signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader, will be presented for approval by the Accounts and Audit Committee in September 2013.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: - CIPFA) /SOLACE – “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government” – Framework, Guidance Note, Briefing Note and Addendum (2012).



TRAFFORD COUNCIL

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012/13 (Draft)

Trafford Council - 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement

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1. Scope of Responsibility

- 1.1 Trafford Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Trafford Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regards to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, Trafford Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 Trafford Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. A copy of the Authority's code is on our website at : http://www.trafford.gov.uk/cme/live/dynamic/DocMan2Document.asp?document_id=A11CE6BB-DC70-4E12-A1F1-651099586309. This statement explains how Trafford Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, regulation 4 (3), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

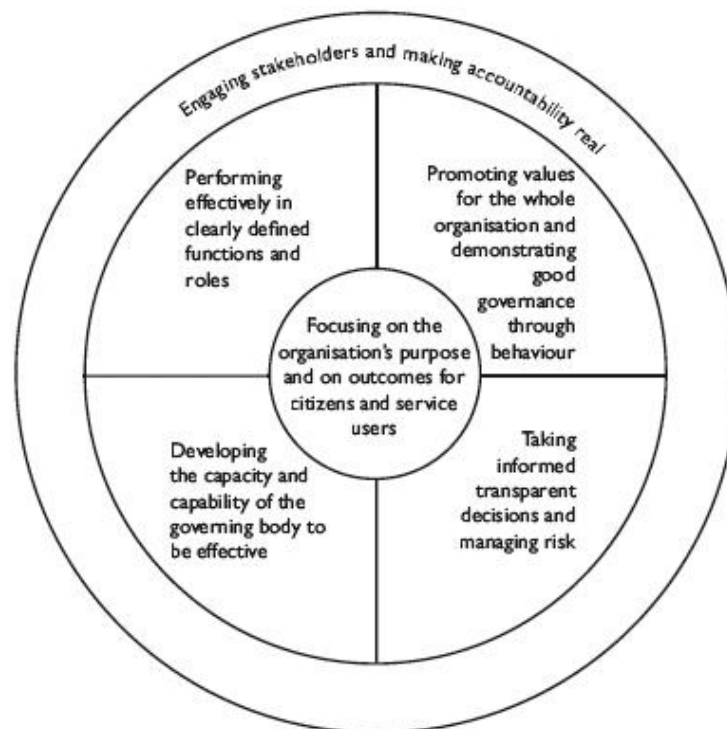
2. Purpose of the Governance framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Trafford Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework has been in place at Trafford Council for the year ended 31 March 2013 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

3. The Governance Framework

3.1 The Authority has adopted a local governance framework which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. It is reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it remains fit for purpose. The Trafford Council Corporate Governance Code sets out in detail how the Authority meets the requirements of the framework. The Framework is based on 6 principles of good governance as follows:

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3.2 The key elements of the system and processes that comprise the authority's governance framework are outlined in this Annual Governance Statement, describing how the Authority can demonstrate the effectiveness of governance arrangements during 2012/13 with reference to each of the six governance principles.

CIPFA SOLACE Principle 1.	Key Elements of Trafford Framework
<p>Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Community Strategy (Trafford Vision 2021: A Blueprint) • Corporate Vision and Priorities • Annual Delivery Plan • Transformation Programme • Revenue Budget Monitoring • Capital Programme
<p>How we have delivered against the Principle in 2012/13</p>	
<p>The Council's corporate priorities were reviewed and updated in March 2013. Reshaping Trafford Council has been recognised as a key priority reflecting the need to continue to develop innovative approaches and work in collaboration.</p> <p>The Council continues to lead and support development of the Trafford Partnership. In response to the localism agenda, the Authority presented its "Vision 2015" as part of the 2013-15 budget consultation process. This supports the Trafford Partnership vision for locality working, setting out how through developing robust partnerships it will achieve the best possible outcomes based on the collective resource available.</p> <p>In March 2013, the Trafford Partnership won the Local Government Chronicle 2013 'Public Sector Partnership Award'. It was commended for its innovative and successful approaches to attracting external investment, involving residents in decision making and working in partnership to tackle key issues such as crime, health and employment, including for the most vulnerable residents in our community. Secondly, in 2012/13, the Council also obtained the Improvement and Efficiency "Working Together" Silver Award, for its collaboration activity with Greater Manchester Police at Stretford Police Station, given the approach taken to identify buildings and services suitable for co-location, the use of innovative technology, data sharing and the development of expertise by joint working.</p> <p>The Council has continued to deliver a dynamic Transformation Programme, delivering savings ahead of schedule and exceeding target. At the end of 2012/13 the Council had realised total savings for the year of over £12m. In 2012, one of the Transformation projects, Project SWiTch, which included collaboration with Wigan and Stockport Councils to implement an HR and Payroll System, won "Best Implementation Project category" in the Payroll World awards. As part of the transformation project to achieve long term accommodation savings, in 2012/13 work in rebuilding and refurbishing the Town Hall was completed. The Council has also been short-listed for the Municipal Journal Award of Best Achieving Council.</p> <p>The three year Capital Programme has been fully reviewed and remodelled as part of the budget process to ensure it continues to meet corporate priorities and is affordable with the level of resources available. Throughout 2012/13 the CMT and Executive received regular financial reports to monitor the revenue and capital budget position.</p> <p>An Annual Delivery Plan sets out the key deliverables for the coming year supported by individual Corporate Directorate plans, which connect service objectives and associated actions</p>	

to the community vision and corporate priorities. Progress against the 2012/13 Annual Delivery Plan was reported quarterly through CMT and the Executive. Monthly performance reports were provided to the Executive Portfolio holder.

CIPFA SOLACE Principle 2.

Key Elements of Trafford Framework

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

- Constitution
- Executive Terms of Office
- Scheme of Delegation to Officers
- Member Officer Relations Protocols
- Employment Procedure Rules
- Pay Policy Statement
- Members Allowance Scheme

How we have delivered against the Principle in 2012/13

The Council Constitution in place sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

A review of the Constitution has taken place during 2012/13 to ensure that this reflects recent organisational changes and that working practices are still relevant for the efficient operation of the Council. The arrangements for delegation of Executive and Council (non-Executive) functions and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers have been updated.

The Head of Paid Service is the Council’s Chief Executive. The Council’s Acting Director of Legal & Democratic Services is designated as “Monitoring Officer”. It is the function of the Monitoring Officer to oversee and monitor compliance with legislation and the Council’s established policies and procedures. The Council has designated the Director of Finance as Chief Finance Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Authority’s financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010)

Member Officer Relations Protocols have been developed which provide guidance to assist in facilitating good working relations between members and officers.

The Employment Committee continued to meet throughout the year and received updates on key workforce issues including proposed changes to employee terms and conditions. The Council’s Pay Policy was reviewed (and updated after the year end in April 2013).

The Council has integrated Adult and Children’s Services to create the Children’s, Families and Wellbeing Directorate from April 2013. This will incorporate Public Health responsibilities which transferred to the Council on 1 April 2013 including the Director of Public Health statutory post. A due diligence exercise was undertaken during 2012/13 as part of the transfer of responsibilities to the Council. Implementation of governance arrangements will continue to be monitored.

In accordance with the requirements of the Health & Social Care Act 2012, a shadow Health &

Wellbeing Board has been operating since May 2012, with existing membership and working arrangements formally adopted from 1st April 2013.

CIPFA SOLACE Principle 3.	Key Elements of Trafford Framework
Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Code of Conduct • Members Code of Conduct • Disciplinary Policy • ICT Acceptable Use Policy • Anti Fraud & Corruption Strategy • Whistle blowing Policy • Corporate Complaints Procedure • Standards Committee • Corporate Governance Code
How we have delivered against the Principle in 2012/13	
<p>In response to the Localism Act 2011 requirements, a local Members Code of Conduct was adopted by the Council in September 2012 including protocols for disclosable pecuniary interests and personal interests. Councillors have received training in relation to the new framework.</p> <p>The Council’s Standards Committee continued to meet throughout the year and receive regular updates from the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>All staff are required to abide by an Employee Code of Conduct. Responsibility for the regulation of employee conduct is set out in the Council’s Disciplinary Policy. Reminders on requirements to declare offers of gifts and hospitality were issued during the year.</p> <p>Users of the Trafford ICT network are required to sign up to the authority’s Acceptable Use Policy to confirm acceptance of agreed responsibilities and standards to prevent misuse of equipment or networks.</p> <p>The Council’s Anti Fraud & Corruption Strategy and Policy were reviewed and updated during 2012/13 including updating guidance for responding to and reporting suspected fraud. The Council has an agreed Whistle-blowing Policy in place. The Council continues to participate in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation the Council has in place a policy, procedures and a dedicated Corporate Information Officer to provide support and guidance to employees.</p> <p>The Employee Recognition Awards Scheme was launched to appreciate the contribution of both individual employees and teams and demonstrates Council values to staff.</p> <p>The Council’s Corporate Governance Code has been reviewed and updated to reflect recent guidance issued by CIPFA SOLACE and best practice requirements.</p>	

CIPFA SOLACE Principle 4.	Key Elements of Trafford Framework
<p>Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Making Protocols • Access to Information Procedure Rules • Scrutiny Committees and Protocols • Risk Management Strategy & Policy Statement • Strategic Risk Register • Internal Audit • Accounts & Audit Committee
<p>How we have delivered against the Principle in 2012/13</p>	
<p>The Council has adopted the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations which came into effect during Sept 2012. Details of key decisions must be published at least 28 days before this is due to be taken. The modern.gov system has been implemented to provide better presentation of reports and information on the Council website. Improvements have been made to the Authority's internal reporting protocols with a programme of training being delivered.</p> <p>The Council reviewed and streamlined its Scrutiny arrangements and in response to the changes set out in the Health & Social Care Act 2012, in addition to the Scrutiny Committee established a separate Health Scrutiny Committee. Scrutiny protocols have been reviewed and updated including guidance on arrangements to seek and involve partners and the public in scrutiny work.</p> <p>A key piece of scrutiny work included a review of the 2013-15 budget consultation, with recommendations agreed for the Executive to provide ongoing progress reports on proposals and the impact on specific service delivery. A joint Health Scrutiny Committee has been established with Manchester City Council to consider the proposals set out in the New Health Deal for Trafford. Scrutiny had also been engaged in implementation of the Council Tax and welfare reforms.</p> <p>The Risk Management Strategy and Policy Statement were reviewed and updated during 2012/13. The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed and updated each quarter. The March 2013 report identified 22 strategic risks faced by the Council, each risk being managed by nominated staff / groups within the Council.</p> <p>The Internal Audit 2012/13 work plan incorporated coverage of key financial systems and other business risks. Quarterly updates of work undertaken were provided to the Corporate Management Team and the Accounts and Audit Committee. The Annual Internal Audit Report for 2012/13 states that the overall control environment continues to operate to a satisfactory standard.</p> <p>The Internal Audit function, provided by the Audit and Assurance Service operated in 2012/13 in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Audit Practice for Internal Audit. (In 2013/14 the Service will be reviewing its processes against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards introduced from April 2013). The Council's assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010).</p>	

Internal Audit conducts annual reviews of the effectiveness of financial systems as part of the review of overall governance arrangements, and incorporates business critical systems plus other systems where it was considered that material levels of financial transactions occurred. The results of the 2012/13 Audit of these systems will be reflected in the Final 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement issued in September 2013.

The External Auditor’s Annual Governance Report 2011/12 presented in Sept 2012 provided an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and identified proper arrangements in place to secure value for money. The Report highlighted the need for some control improvements in the payroll system which it was confirmed in the External Annual Audit Letter in November 2012 that the Council is addressing. Where appropriate, the Final 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement will be updated to reflect any issues arising from the 2012/13 external audit process).

The Accounts & Audit Committee met five times as planned throughout 2012/13 receiving regular updates in relation to strategic risks and governance issues. The Committee operated in accordance with its remit following guidance set out in CIPFA’s “Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities.”

CIPFA SOLACE Principle 5.	Key Elements of Trafford Framework
Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members’ Training Plan • Members’ Induction Process • Employee Training & Development Plan • Corporate Induction Procedure • Employees Personal Development Review • Absence Management Strategy • Apprenticeship Scheme • Managing Organisational Change Toolkit
How we have delivered against the Principle in 2012/13	
<p>A Member Training Plan was produced which has been informed by Training Needs Analysis and individual Personal Development reviews. Training has been delivered during the year in relation to the new standards regime, community leadership and locality working. The Council has committed to re-assessment for Level 1 of the North West Employers Organisation Members Charter.</p>	
<p>A revised People Strategy is due to be implemented, to be informed by the findings of the 2012 Employee Survey and current Employee Value Proposition survey undertaken in partnership with the Local Government Association.</p>	
<p>During 2012, detailed Training and Development Plans have been agreed for each Directorate and cross council. As the lead authority on the AGMA training procurement framework and a partner in the AGMA e-learning framework, work is underway to develop appropriate delivery methods including bespoke training solutions.</p>	
<p>A Leadership Development training programme (Managing Change through Challenging Times) has been delivered to managers across the organisation including a practical toolkit for</p>	

managing change. A procurement exercise is underway to deliver a training programme with the aim to further equip managers through the provision of coaching skills.

A Mentoring programme has been implemented with over forty managers across the organisation having completed training and a high proportion have been matched with internal apprentices and job seekers across the borough.

The Internal Apprenticeship scheme has had over fifty recruits in a broad range of disciplines and five of these have secured permanent employment with the Council.

There is an established attendance management policy with supporting procedures and guidance. A number of initiatives have been provided to staff to promote Health & Wellbeing and a positive attendance culture at work.

The Council won the North of England Excellence Award for the category of public sector organisation with over 250 employees. The assessment team commented on the commitment to providing a quality service despite the austere economic climate.

CIPFA SOLACE Principle 6.	Key Elements of Trafford Framework
Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Budget Consultation • Locality Partnerships • Neighbourhood Forums • Info Trafford • Corporate Complaints Procedure
How we have delivered against the Principle in 2012/13	
<p>The Council continues to demonstrate compliance with Open Data requirements, publishing details of a range of financial and performance data on its website.</p>	
<p>The InfoTrafford site has developed significantly and the range of data available continues to be extended now incorporating data from the 2011 Census, geo demographic segmentation data; and a wide range of health data. Ward Profiles have been developed, providing stakeholders access to a wide range of data at ward level. Examples of research activity during 2012/13 include understanding the impact of welfare reform and modelling and analysing data in the context of Locality Needs. InfoTrafford is being utilised by Third Sector organisations and a bid toolkit will be developed to allow organisations to quickly access information to support applications for funding.</p>	
<p>Over 5,000 people have been using the Council's Application for iPhone and Android devices to find information, report issues and locate nearby facilities since it was launched in 2010. Further enhancements to the Apps are planned, which will improve functionality and services for users.</p>	
<p>The Budget Consultation 2013-15 took place over 3 months commencing in Oct 2012, publicised through the Your Trafford magazine delivered to every household in Trafford. A variety of mechanisms were used including questionnaires, surveys, easy read versions, letters to service users, face to face briefings, public meetings, a dedicated helpline and use of brokers.</p>	

Responses were received from over 3000 service users and 200 organisations.

The Council has reviewed its strategic approach to Customer Service and in 2013/14 will publish its Customer Strategy which aims to embed customer service excellence across the organisation. The strategy recommendations will be delivered and monitored through the Customer Strategic Delivery Group which will be monitored by the Transformation, Performance and Resources Group. The Council has an approved Corporate Complaints Policy and supporting guidance and this has also been subject to review as part of the development of the Customer Strategy. In 2013/14, the Customer Strategy, including the outcomes of the complaints review, will be made available to the public for consultation ahead of formal approval by the Executive.

The Council has led the response to the Localism agenda and through its Vision 2015 has set out its commitment to involve residents and devolve services to local communities. This includes the introduction of four Locality Boards from April 2013 to be launched with a role in engaging the community, understanding local needs and coordinating existing plans and activities. Local residents will be represented on Locality Partnerships through the appointment of a number of individuals as Community Ambassadors who will represent in deciding local priorities and shaping local services.

The Council has procured a Third Sector Infrastructure Support Organisation to deliver the objectives of the Third Sector Strategy. During 2012/13 performance against the delivery plan was on target.

The Trafford Partnership hosts an annual stakeholder engagement event; In the previous year, the March 2012 Neighbourhood Action Event was attended by over 200 public, private and third sector representatives engaging stakeholders to identify priorities and actions at neighbourhood level. During 2012/13 £200,000 community grants have been allocated across four neighbourhoods through participatory budgeting. The 4th annual event 'Shape the Future' will be held in April 2013 to formally launch the Locality Partnerships.

The Council's Neighbourhood Forums provide a public forum to discuss local issues and understand how the Council is working to tackle them.

The Council's Procurement Service and local partners coordinate the Annual Meet the Buyer event (last held in March 2013) to invite local businesses to learn about forthcoming procurement opportunities and obtain information and advice.

4. Review of effectiveness

- 4.1 Trafford Council's Corporate Governance Code sets out the Authority's responsibility to undertake a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework on an annual basis. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and the results of other reviews / inspections.
- 4.2 The processes applied and sources of assurance obtained in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of governance arrangements and, as part of that, the system of internal control includes

Management Controls :

Performance Management

There is regular monitoring on the achievement of corporate objectives through the Annual Delivery Plan. A monthly dashboard report is issued to Corporate Directors and Executive Portfolio holders containing performance data specific to their remit.

Financial Management

Monthly financial monitoring and reporting, on the revenue budget, to the Corporate Management Team and the Executive has been operating during the year. Quarterly monitoring and reporting arrangements are operating for the capital budget

Risk Management.

The Council has a strategic risk register in place and Directors and the Accounts and Audit Committee have reviewed the associated arrangements in place for improving control and mitigating risks faced by the Council.

Legal

The Director of Legal & Democratic Services (the "Monitoring Officer") has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect, and to recommend amendments to the Council, as necessary, on an ongoing basis.

Transformation Programme

Benefits realisation tracking and a summary of project delivery is reported monthly to the Transformation Board.

Internal assurance:

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit function is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control. The section works to a risk based audit plan which is reviewed and approved by the Corporate Management Team and the Accounts and Audit Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny

The Council's Core Overview and Scrutiny Committees can "call in" decisions made by the Executive, or on their behalf with delegated authority, to challenge whether the decision has been made appropriately and ask the Executive to reconsider it if necessary.

Health and Safety

The Council's Health and Safety Unit provide regular updates to the Corporate Management Team and produce six monthly updates for the Executive.

External assurance:

External Audit

The Council is subject to external audit. The External Auditor's Annual Governance Report and Annual Audit Letter comment on the performance of the Council and the adequacy of financial and governance arrangements.

Other Inspection

There are inspection arrangements within particular service areas / functions e.g. Ofsted inspections of schools.

Sector Led Improvement: Following the reduction in external inspection, the Council has committed to participate in a number of sector led improvement initiatives for example the North West Employers Organisation Charter for Member Development and in partnership with the Local Government Association, a benchmarking project through the Employees Values Proposition Survey.

- 4.3 These governance functions are described in more detail within the Council's Corporate Governance Code and specific assurances or improvements delivered during 2012/13 are detailed in Sections 3 and 5 of this Statement.
- 4.4 **We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Accounts and Audit Committee, and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The areas already addressed and those to be specifically addressed with new actions planned are set out in Section 5.**

5. Significant Governance issues

- 5.1 The Council takes seriously its responsibilities and duties with regard to ensuring continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised and in consideration of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 5.2 In response to the 2011/12 review of the internal control environment and the identification of a number of control issues, the Council has taken significant action to address those issues and implement appropriate improvement actions through 2012/13:

2011/12 issue	Action Taken in 2012/13
<p>1. Continue in 2012/13 to fully embed records management and information management practices, policies and procedures across the Council.</p>	<p>The Records Management Project has continued to progress throughout 2012/13. (The Accounts and Audit Committee received an update on progress at its February 2013 meeting).</p> <p>All cutover activities associated with preparing teams for the introduction of the new ways of working with the electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) have been completed.</p> <p>A new contract for offsite storage, scan on demand and destruction of confidential records has been procured with all teams using the service on a daily basis. In addition a number of teams including Human Resources, Legal Services and parts of Finance have carried out scanning projects of legacy documents; all these documents are available through an online viewing platform. The result of this is more efficient and effective access to records, access based on a robust security model and a huge reduction in the storage footprint of the new town hall.</p>
<p>2. Development of a formal workforce plan, the development of the organisational wide training and development strategy and internal mentoring and coaching programmes.</p>	<p>There has been significant progress made in the wider leadership, management and workforce development agenda. (The Accounts and Audit Committee received an update at its March 2013 meeting of key developments).</p> <p>Details of progress made are reflected in section 3 of this Statement (Core Principle 5) including developments in relation to the People Strategy, training and developments plans and programmes, mentoring scheme and apprenticeship scheme.</p>
<p>3. Review and update of the Council's Anti-Fraud and</p>	<p>The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy was reviewed and updated in 2012/13 as planned</p>

2011/12 issue	Action Taken in 2012/13
Corruption Strategy with the development of supporting guidance to ensure effective anti-fraud and corruption measures continue to be in place.	and approved by the Accounts and Audit Committee. Supporting guidance has been reviewed and updated and is being rolled out across the Council. This has included updated guidance for reporting fraud and the provision of an e-learning tool. Ongoing awareness raising work will continue in 2013/14.

5.3 The Council is committed to achieving its objectives through good governance and continuous improvement. Going forward, the Council will continue to transform service delivery arrangements, to ensure the Council effectively delivers its objectives and manages its resources to meet the ongoing financial challenges being faced.

5.4 Detailed below are significant governance issues and a summary of the actions planned to address these in 2013/14.

2012/13 Issues and Action Planned 2013/14

1. Records Management

As part of the records management programme the Council tendered for an EDRMS solution but the initial solution identified was found not to meet the Council's requirements so the process of obtaining a suitable solution is still in progress.

This has not stopped the programme of works as work is continuing to improve business processes around managing the lifecycle of Trafford Council records, reviewing the current security model and implementing changes to meet 'best practice'. All work carried out to date on the cutover activities will be used in this next phase and therefore it has been a 'value added' activity as part of the journey to improve our records management practices.

The Information Security Governance group is now fully formed and a number of work streams are in progress including reviews of current policies and procedures, gap analysis, registration with ICT connections for working with Health teams plus a number of bespoke training packages to improve the education and understanding of employees regarding information security and information governance.

2. Locality Partnerships

As referred to earlier, the Council has set out its commitment to involve residents and devolve services to local communities. This includes the introduction of four Locality Boards from April 2013 to be launched with a role in engaging the community, understanding local needs and coordinating existing plans and activities.

The Locality Partnerships will be developed during 2013/14 and transform from shadow form to full status. During the first year a Locality Assessment and action plan will be developed, alongside terms of reference and a code of conduct. An outcomes framework will also be developed, linked to the action plan, and will focus on not only quantitative outcomes but also qualitative outcomes and experiences.

2012/13 Issues and Action Planned 2013/14

The governance framework includes reporting to the Stronger Communities Board and the Trafford Partnership Executive.

3. Terms and Conditions

In 2012/13, the Council began a process of considering a number of options which would result in changes to staff terms and conditions as part of ongoing plans to achieve savings. The Council started a review of staff terms and conditions to try to find ways to achieve maximum savings with minimum impact on the workforce and where at all possible, without changing core employment benefits, i.e. basic pay and pensions. The Council also wants to protect those staff on lower salaries.

In 2012/13, a number of ideas were shared with staff and trade unions to gain feedback to assist in considering any possible changes. Staff were given the opportunity to comment on the initial ideas and also provide alternative suggestions. In 2013/14, proposals for changes to terms and conditions are to be developed for formal consultation.

4. Public Health

Responsibility for Public Health transferred to Trafford Council on 1 April 2013. The Council provides a lead on health and wellbeing priorities to improve local health outcomes. Plans focus on commissioning existing, new and innovative public health services, with a range of partners across public sector, private and voluntary sector partnerships. From 1 April 2013, the Council also has responsibility for ensuring areas such as emergency planning, immunisation and screening programmes, infection control, outbreaks and incidents are effectively co-ordinated to preserve and protect the lives of Trafford residents.

Following on from work undertaken in 2012/13 to prepare for the transfer of responsibility to the Council, further action will be taken to ensure effective governance arrangements are in place to support the Council meeting its responsibilities effectively. The Council's Public Health Business Delivery Group has been established which is led by the Director of Public Health. In addition a Public Health Review Programme Board has been convened which will oversee a collaborative review of all key work streams linked to the current Public Health Programme to determine future commissioning intentions and spend. This includes the development of a detailed risk register which will be informed by the review.

5. Public Service Reform in Trafford

Partners in Trafford are committed at the highest level to a collective programme of Public Service Reform (PSR). The objectives of this programme are:

- to ensure that residents in the Borough can benefit from future economic growth, by designing services that can better support them to make positive choices and be independent; and
- to meet the challenge of public sector austerity by reforming services collectively, such that outcomes for residents in the Borough are better than they would have been had reforms been undertaken solely by agencies acting alone.

There is a detailed implementation plan for the first phase of this Public Service Reform

2012/13 Issues and Action Planned 2013/14

(PSR) programme in Trafford which will be progressed through 2013/14. It sets out which agencies, partnerships and individuals are currently undertaking tasks as part of the programme, and what success will look like in the future. Local agencies are currently aligning their own organisational transformation and savings programmes. There is a clear Trafford governance and accountability structure in place which is linked to the Greater Manchester Governance and delivery model.

The detailed thematic plans consider the following:

- **new integrated services** that reduce demand on public agencies in the Borough
- **new investment models** that are able to sustain funding of these services by capturing and reallocating the resources released by this reduced demand; and
- **new approaches to evaluating our integrated services** to show where they are more effective than existing practice, and where possible to create an evidence base that can attract future investment.

Central to the success of this programme so far has been in ensuring a clear focus on the reform of public services as a whole in Trafford. There are significant synergies between the different work streams. The benefits of many of these synergies are being captured by ensuring that there is a whole-family focus which sits at the heart of our new integrated delivery models.

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

(Prior to submission to the Accounts and Audit Committee, the above draft Annual Governance Statement has been reviewed and agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team. The final version of the Statement will be signed off by the Leader and Chief Executive in September 2013).



TRAFFORD COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CODE

June 2013

Trafford Council Corporate Governance Code

1. What do we mean by governance?

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.

2. Trafford's commitment

Trafford Council, as a public organisation, is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of governance in order to fulfil its responsibilities:

1. To engage in effective partnerships and provide leadership for and with the community.
2. To ensure the delivery of high quality local services whether directly or in partnership or by commissioning.
3. To perform a stewardship role which protects the interests of local people and makes the best use of resources
4. To develop citizenship and local democracy.

Openness, inclusion, integrity and accountability are fundamental principles by which the Council operates.

3. The Governance Framework

In order to ensure the fulfilment of its commitment the Council operates a governance framework which provides a structure to support the Council's approach to governance.

Trafford Council has based its governance framework on the guidance produced in the publication 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers (SOLACE). In addition, further related guidance documents issued by CIPFA such as "the Role of the Chief Financial Officer" and the "Role of the Head of Internal Audit" are also applied.

The CIPFA / SOLACE framework sets out 6 core principles for good governance.

- Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
- Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

- Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Section 7 of the Code sets out in detail how the Authority is committed to meet the requirements of this framework.

4. How we will ensure that we deliver on these principles of good governance

Maintain a local code of corporate governance

In accordance with best practice requirements Trafford Council maintains a local code of corporate governance which sets out the key systems, policies and procedures that comprise the Authority's governance framework. This document will be reviewed and updated regularly as required, and approved by the Corporate Management Team and Accounts and Audit Committee, to reflect any changes in governance arrangements.

Undertake an annual review of governance arrangements

The Audit and Assurance Service is responsible for undertaking an annual review to evaluate the position against the commitments set out in the Council's Corporate Governance Code, the effectiveness of governance arrangements and to ensure continuing compliance with best practice.

Where appropriate, action plans will be produced to ensure any significant weaknesses identified are addressed and there is continuous improvement in the system of corporate governance.

Findings and recommendations from this exercise will be reported via the Corporate Management Team. This will be used to inform the production of the Annual Governance Statement, with significant issues reported publicly through this process.

Report publicly on compliance with governance arrangements in the Annual Governance Statement

The Authority will produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011. This will be published and will accompany the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. It will state what arrangements the Council has in place to ensure the effectiveness of its governance framework and how the Council has followed its stated governance

principles. It will also highlight any areas the Council considers to require significant improvement; and outline the actions planned to address them.

The Accounts and Audit Committee (through an appointed working group) will review the robustness of the AGS. The Chief Executive and the Leader are required to sign off the AGS.

5. Responsibilities

Every Council officer and member has a responsibility to ensure their personal conduct and the organisation's governance arrangements are always of the highest standard possible.

Senior managers have a responsibility for reviewing governance standards in their areas of responsibility and for identifying and implementing any necessary improvement actions. Improvement actions should be reflected in the appropriate business plans.

The Chief Executive and Leader will ensure that an annual review is completed of corporate governance arrangements and give assurances on their adequacy in the published Annual Governance Statement, accompanying the Statement of Accounts.

The Corporate Management Team will ensure that the Corporate Governance Code is reviewed regularly to reflect ongoing developments and planned improvements to the framework; and authorise any amendments. Significant changes may be referred to the Council's Executive for approval.

6. Communication

The Corporate Governance Code and Annual Governance Statement will be reported publicly with a copy available on the Authority's website.

7. Trafford Council's Governance Framework

Principle 1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area	
Supporting Principle	How the Council meets the requirements
<p><i>1.1 Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users</i></p>	<p>The Council as the lead partner in the Trafford Partnership has supported the development of the long term vision for Trafford as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy "Vision 2021: a blueprint". This document describes the key objectives which underpin the work of the partnership.</p> <p>The Council reviews its priorities and implications for its governance arrangements on a regular basis. In response to the Localism Agenda the Council has updated its Vision 2015 aligning it to the changing way services will be delivered in localities and through partnership working. The Council's corporate priorities are reviewed annually and incorporated within the Annual Delivery Plan.</p> <p>The Council publishes details of its strategy, financial position and performance on its website trafford.gov.uk. Information in relation to partnership activity and performance is reported through the Trafford Partnership website traffordpartnership.org.uk</p>

1.2 Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, in partnership, or by commissioning

The Authority has put arrangements in place to measure and review the quality of service for users including mechanisms to identify and deal with failure in service delivery. Robust management information is available to enable monitoring of service quality effectively and regularly.

The Council operates a robust and effective **Performance Management Framework**. The **Annual Delivery Plan** sets out the key deliverables for the coming year supported by individual Directorate and Service business plans, which connect service objectives and associated actions to the community vision and corporate priorities.

The **Corporate Management Team** and **Executive** receive regular monitoring and exception reports on the achievement of corporate objectives. In addition, a monthly performance report is issued to Corporate Directors and Executive Portfolio holders containing performance data specific to their remit

The **Transformation, Performance & Resources Group** is responsible for driving the Transformation Programme, and to ensure successful realisation of all savings, the performance of the programme is monitored by the **Transformation Board** on a monthly basis; this board also receives regular monitoring and exception reports relating to the achievement of project deliverables and benefits.

The Council has a strategic approach to Customer Service, to be monitored through the **Customer Strategic Delivery Group**. The Council has an approved **Corporate Complaints Policy** and guidance.

The Council's **Contract Procedure Rules** set out the agreed protocols for procurement and tendering for contracts including post contract arrangements.

1.3 Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.

Low Council Tax and Value For Money is one of the Council's Corporate priorities. Trafford was one of the first councils to introduce a **Medium Term Financial Plan** and Strategy, highlighted by CIPFA as good practice. The Authority consults annually on its budget proposals and these are subject to scrutiny review.

The council has implemented a **Transformation Programme** which is supporting the organisation to review and re-design existing functions and services areas to improve service delivery, achieve savings and establish the infrastructure required to manage the future financial challenges. The Council hosts the **AGMA Procurement Hub** and has a defined **Procurement Strategy**.

The authority has robust **Budgetary Control Procedures** in place. **Revenue Budget Monitoring** reports are reported to the Corporate Management Team and the Executive on a monthly basis to enable monitoring of income and expenditure levels, to ensure that commitments are within available resource levels and corrective action is taken when necessary.

The Council's financial framework keeps its commitments in balance with available resources. There are arrangements in place to ensure compliance with **CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities** and **CIPFA's Treasury Management Code**. The Council has a clearly defined **Capital Programme** and **Treasury Management Strategy**. The capital budget is monitored and reported to the CMT and Executive each quarter.

Principle 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.	
Supporting Principle	How the Council meets the requirements
<i>2.1 Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about the executive and non executive functions and the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.</i>	<p>The Council has adopted a Constitution which provides a clear statement of how it operates, defining the respective roles and responsibilities of the Executive and non Executive members.</p> <p>Article 15 of this document sets out the protocols and the role of the Monitoring Officer to monitor and review the operation of the constitution. The Council reviews elements of the Constitution each year at its annual meeting.</p>
<i>2.2 Ensuring a constructive working relationship exists between elected members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard.</i>	<p>Part 3 of the Constitution sets out responsibility for carrying out the Council's functions, at committee level and delegation to individual executive members. Part 4 sets out the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. The sections on delegated authority are reviewed and approved annually.</p> <p>The Council has appointed a Chief Executive responsible and accountable to the Authority for all aspects of operational management. The functions of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer are set out in Article 12 of the Constitution. .</p> <p>The Council has designated the Director of Finance as Chief Finance Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. Periodic assessment is undertaken to ensure compliance with the governance standards as set out in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010).</p> <p>The Council's Director of Legal & Democratic Services is designated as "Monitoring Officer". It is the function of the Monitoring Officer to oversee and monitor compliance with legislation and the Council's established policies and procedures.</p>

2.3 Ensuring relationships between the authority and its partners and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of each other

The Authority has adopted **Member Officer Relations Protocols** which provide guidance to help build good working relations between members and officers.

The **Officer Employment Procedure Rules** set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of employees. A **Pay Policy Statement** has been published which provides transparency regarding the Council's approach to setting pay for its employees.

The Council has agreed a **Members Allowance Scheme** setting out the level of financial allowance that members may receive.

When working in partnership, members are clear about their roles and responsibilities individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and the authority. The Council Leader is the Chair of the **Trafford Partnership Executive** which has defined Terms of Reference in place. A framework for **Accountability, Governance and Performance Management** has been adopted by the Partnership.

In accordance with the requirements of the Health & Social Care Act 2012, a **Health & Wellbeing Board** has been established. Supporting this, the Council has in place a number of strategic partnership arrangements governed through **Section 75 Partnership Agreements**.

Principle 3
Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

Supporting Principle	How the Council meets the requirements
<p><i>3.1 Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance</i></p>	<p>In accordance with requirements of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has reviewed and adopted its Members Code of Conduct incorporating procedures for notification of disclosable pecuniary interests and hearing procedures. Protocols set out the arrangements for dealing with complaints about the code of conduct for members.</p> <p>All staff are required to abide by an Employee Code of Conduct. It is a requirement for all new employees to read and sign up to this as part of the staff induction procedure. Responsibility for the regulation of employee conduct is set out in the Council’s Disciplinary Policy. A range of Human Resource policies in place are designed to help ensure the proper conduct of staff and to ensure the workforce is appropriately skilled to deliver the Council’s aims and objectives.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place to ensure that members and employees of the Authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure they continue to operate in practice.</p> <p>The authority has an Anti Fraud & Corruption Strategy and procedures for the reporting of suspected fraudulent activities.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Council has adopted a policy, procedures and a dedicated Corporate Information Officer to provide support and guidance to employees.</p> <p>Users of the Trafford ICT network are required to sign up to the authority’s Acceptable Use Policy to confirm acceptance of agreed responsibilities and standards to prevent misuse of equipment or networks</p>

3.2 Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.

The Council has adopted a set of **Corporate Values** embedded within its policies, procedures and strategies. The Council's competency framework outlines the organisation's values and the behaviours expected of employees when fulfilling their roles.

The organisation's shared values act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Authority.

The Authority has implemented arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and for monitoring their continuing effectiveness in practice.

The Council has adopted a "**Local Code of Corporate Governance**" in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for Corporate Governance. The Council undertakes an annual review of the Code of Corporate Governance and associated arrangements.

The **Standards Committee**, with an independent Chairman, has within its role, the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct of members and the responsibility to oversee the effective operation of **the Code of Conduct for Members**.

The financial management of the Council is conducted in accordance with the **Financial Procedure Rules** and **Contract Procedure Rules** incorporated within Part 4 of the Constitution.

Systems and processes for financial administration, financial control and protection of the Authority's resources and assets are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.

Principle 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk	
Supporting Principle	How the Council meets the requirements
<p><i>4.1 Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.</i></p>	<p>The Council has developed detailed procedures for political decision making. There are clear processes for recording and monitoring executive decisions in order to ensure compliance with legislation, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful. The Executive has to make decisions in line with the Council’ overall policies and budget. Any decisions to be made outside this framework must be referred to full Council.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committees provide the scrutiny of decisions made, policy development and implementation and can “call in” decisions made by the Executive, or on their behalf with delegated authority, to challenge whether the decision has been made appropriately and ask the Executive to reconsider it if necessary.</p> <p>The Council has an Internal Audit function which is required to operate to the standards set out in the CIPFA “Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government” (these being replaced by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards from 2013/14). The Internal Audit function is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control.</p> <p>The Council has an Accounts and Audit Committee whose terms of reference require it to monitor and evaluate the Council’s corporate governance and internal control arrangements. The Committee operates in accordance with CIPFA guidance for Audit Committees.</p>

<p><i>4.2 Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants / needs</i></p>	<p>Part 4 of the Constitution sets out the Access to Information Procedure Rules including the rights to attend meetings and access summons, agenda and reports. Where major ‘key’ decisions are to be discussed or made, these are set out in a notice published at least 28 days before a decision is made.</p> <p>Those making decisions, whether for the Authority or in partnership, are provided with information that is fit for purpose –clear, timely, relevant, accurate and complete and gives clear explanations of issues and implications on both a financial and non financial basis.</p> <p>The Authority seeks timely professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications, which is recorded in advance of decision making and used appropriately.</p>
<p><i>4.3 Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place</i></p>	<p>Risk management is embedded into the culture of the organisation. The Council has a Risk Management Policy Statement, Strategy and protocol for monitoring and reporting risk. These explain the methodology which provides a comprehensive framework for the management of risk throughout the Council.</p> <p>The Council’s Strategic Risk Register sets out the key risks the Council is likely to face in achieving its high level corporate objectives. In accordance with the Council’s Risk Management Policy Statement, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) provides regular quarterly updates on the strategic risk environment and in particular performance in managing the specific risks.</p> <p>The Council has adopted a Confidential Reporting Code and supporting guidance. which sets out the whistle blowing protocols for reporting, responding to and monitoring of issues of concern.</p>

4.4 Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area

The **Constitution** sets out how the Council will operate to deliver services and perform its functions within the wider legal framework. Part 3 sets out Responsibility for Functions at committee and executive portfolio level. It also sets out the proper officer arrangements for delivering specific legislative requirements.

The Authority actively recognises the limits of lawful activity placed on it but also strives to utilise powers to the full benefit of communities. It recognises the limits of lawful action and observes both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law.

The **Monitoring Officer** will, after consulting with the Head of Paid Service and the Chief Finance Officer, report to the full Council or to the Executive, in relation to an Executive function, if she considers that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposal or decision being implemented until the report has been considered

The Director of Finance, as the **Council's Chief Finance Officer**, has responsibility for the legality of the Council's financial transactions.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that they establish and maintain effective standards of governance, complying with legislation, the Council's Constitution, Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules.

Principle 5 Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective	
Supporting Principle	How the Council meets the requirements
<p><i>5.1 Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their role.</i></p>	<p>The Authority provides induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.</p> <p>Member Induction Training is undertaken each year. Member training needs are regularly reviewed and a Training & Development Plan for Members is in place. The Council has committed to the re-assessment of the North West Level 1 Charter for Elected Member Development.</p> <p>All new employees are required to complete a Corporate Induction Module. The Council has developed Directorate and cross-council Training & Development Plans supported by a suite of e-learning solutions available to meet the organisational skills development needs.</p> <p>The Authority puts arrangements in place to ensure that statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the organisation.</p> <p>The ongoing Transformation Programme is also taking into account consideration of training and development needs across the Council and individual service areas for change management and adopts a skills transfer approach to support colleagues to develop project management and business analysis skills.</p>

<p><i>5.2 Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as individuals and as a group</i></p>	<p>The Authority assesses the skills required by members and officers and makes the commitment to develop these skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively. Skills are developed on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed.</p> <p>There is a behavioural based competency framework and staff appraisal process in place which supports the cascade of corporate objectives and values through to individual employee targets. All staff are required to complete a Personal Development Review annually.</p> <p>Members are requested to complete a Personal Development Review which is used to inform the development of their training plan.</p> <p>The Council has taken a strategic approach to Absence Management. Ongoing performance is monitored as part of the Authority's Annual Delivery Plan.</p>
<p><i>5.3 Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of the individuals skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal</i></p>	<p>The Council has a Leadership Development Programme aimed at developing and nurturing leadership talent within the organisation.</p> <p>The Council operates an Internal Apprenticeship Scheme providing training and mentoring opportunities for Trafford residents.</p> <p>There are effective arrangements in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Authority including recruitment of a number of Community Ambassadors with a role in identifying and prioritising local needs and representing residents on Locality Boards.</p>

Principle 6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability	
Supporting Principle	How the Council meets the requirements
<i>6.1 Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships and developing constructive accountability relationships</i>	<p>The Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The public have a number of rights in their dealings with the Council. These are set out in more detail in Article 3.</p> <p>The Council has implemented detailed guidance and procedures for staff to ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken in relation to all proposed changes in policy, strategy, functions and internal structures.</p> <p>Scrutiny Function – See supporting principle 4.1</p>
<i>6.2 Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning.</i>	<p>The Authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, subject only to those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.</p> <p>Council decisions are based on public consultation including annual review of the budget proposals. Meetings where key decisions are made and scrutinised are open to the public except where exempt information is disclosed.</p> <p>There are clear channels of communication in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders e.g. : through the Council website, social media channels and publications distributed to each household in the borough. The Council has a corporate Communications, Publications and Marketing function in place to oversee internal and external communication and ensure these arrangements are operating effectively.</p> <p>The Council’s Neighbourhood Forums provide a public forum to discuss local issues and understand how the Council is working to tackle them.</p>

	<p>The Council is the lead organisation of the Trafford Partnership, which provides a key role engaging with residents and the community to ensure that priorities and actions at strategic level reflect the needs of local people. . The structure of the partnership is designed to enable effective engagement with residents and the community The 3rd Sector Strategy 2011-14 sets out how the Council and its partners support the sector through capacity building and funding support.</p> <p>The Council is compliant with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requirements and has a Publication Scheme in place. In accordance with the government’s Open Data requirements details of all invoice payments to suppliers, senior officer salaries and details of members’ expense claims are published online.</p> <p>The InfoTrafford website provides free public access to view statistical data about the borough with the aim to provide a tool for community empowerment, decision making and policy development.</p>
<p><i>6.3 Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibilities to staff.</i></p>	<p>The Council has in place Joint Consultative Committee arrangements to establish a regular method of consultation between the Council and the Trade Unions enabling input into human resource issues including proposed organisational and policy changes.</p> <p>The Council operates an Employment Committee responsible for determining collective and corporate terms and conditions of employment and approving any changes in human resources policies.</p> <p>The Authority has produced a toolkit for employees and managers in Managing Organisational Change, which provides guidance for restructuring and review in accordance with statutory requirements and current best practice.</p> <p>There are a range of consultation mechanism in place for Council employees including an online forum, network events, focus group and surveys.</p>