

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Accounts and Audit Committee
Date: 30 July 2018
Report for: Consideration
Report of: Head of Governance

Report Title

Corporate Governance Code

Summary

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 is reviewed and updated regularly as required, and approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and Accounts and Audit Committee, to reflect any changes in governance arrangements.

The Council's Annual Governance Statement is prepared each year (in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015) and reflects an annual review against the commitments set out in the Council's Corporate Governance Code.

Trafford Council's Code of Corporate Governance is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'.
<http://www.trafford.gov.uk/about-your-council/budgets-and-accounts/docs/Corporate-Governance-Code-2017.pdf>

This report sets out the proposed updated Corporate Governance Code which has been reviewed by CLT. The Code has been updated, both to take account of developments in 2017/18 and also the updated framework and guidance issued by CIPFA/SOLACE in 2016/17 "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". This sets out 7 key governance principles and the code was updated in 2017 to align with the revised framework.

Once reviewed and approved by the Accounts and Audit Committee, the updated Corporate Governance Code will be included on the Council's website.

The Committee received a draft version at their last meeting and no further comments were received.

Recommendation

The Accounts and Audit Committee is asked to approve the Corporate Governance Code.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Peter Forrester – Head of Governance

Extension: 1815

Name: Chris Gaffey – Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

Extension: 2019

Background Papers:

None



TRAFFORD COUNCIL

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CODE

July 2018

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

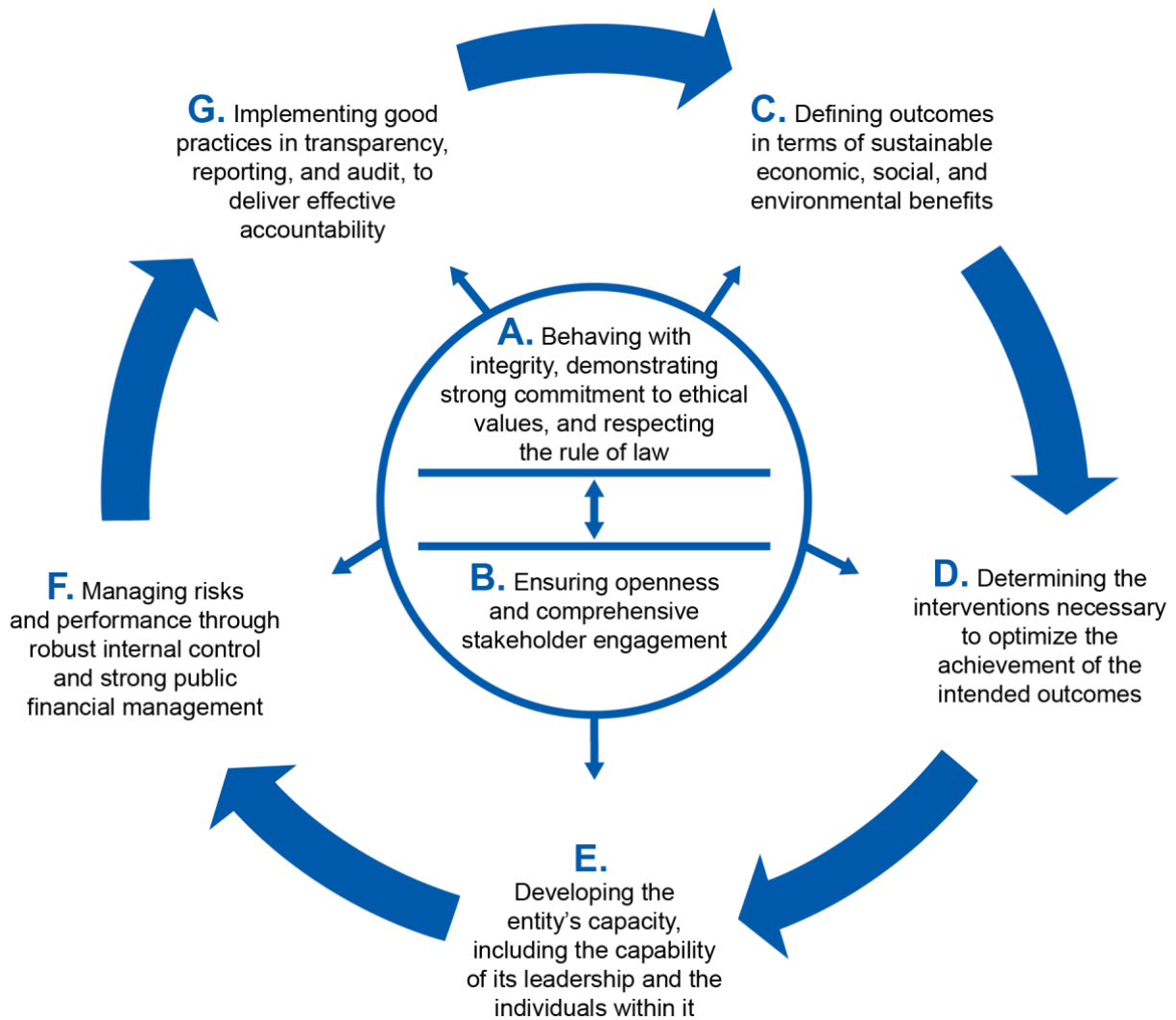
In order to ensure the fulfilment of its commitment, the Council operates a governance framework which provides a structure to support the Council's approach to governance.

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) and has been updated to reflect the revised Local Government Framework published in 2016, which is aligned to the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA / IFAC, 2014).

The International Framework defines governance as 'the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved'.

The framework emphasises that good governance is dynamic and that the entity as a whole should be committed to improving governance on a continuing basis through a process of evaluation and review

Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



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 is reviewed and updated regularly as required and approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and Accounts and Audit Committee, to reflect any changes in governance arrangements.

Undertake an annual review of governance arrangements

The Authority will undertake 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 are 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 Leadership 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 2015. 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 refer to the actions planned to address them.

The Accounts and Audit Committee will review the robustness of the AGS. The Chief Executive and the Leader are required to sign off the agreed final version of 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 Leadership Team will ensure that the Corporate Governance Code is reviewed regularly to reflect ongoing developments and planned improvements to the governance framework; and agree any amendments. The Code will be approved by the Accounts and Audit Committee. Significant changes will 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 A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law	
<p>Behaving with integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity, and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation ➤ Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should be based on the Seven principles of public life (Nolan principles) ➤ Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions ➤ Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are operating effectively. 	<p>In accordance with requirements of the Localism Act 2011, the Council reviewed and adopted its Members Code of Conduct incorporating procedures for notification of disclosable pecuniary interests, personal 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 setting out the expected standards of behaviour. It is a requirement for all new employees to read and sign up to this as part of the staff induction procedure.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place requiring members and employees of the Authority to not be influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. Guidance to Officers on Gifts & Hospitality sets out the circumstances where these may be accepted, and how these should be declared and recorded.</p> <p>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 and these are cascaded through the PDR process.</p> <p>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.</p>

	<p>The authority has an Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy, Policy and supporting guidance to discharge its responsibility to safeguard public funds and promote a 'zero tolerance' culture to fraud and corruption.</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.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

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

The **Standards Committee** 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**. Responsibility for the regulation of employee conduct is set out in the Council's **Disciplinary Policy**.

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**.

The Council's **Contract Procedure Rules** set out the agreed protocols for procurement and tendering for contracts including post contract arrangements, and are harmonised across the three Councils participating in STAR Procurement, the shared procurement service for Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale Councils. Protocols ensure that there is separation of roles within the procurement process, and all relationships of a business / private nature with existing or potential contractors should be declared.

The **Employee Code of Conduct** specifies that to avoid bias and ensure appointments are made on the basis of merit, where applicants are related to or have close personal relationship with an employee; this officer should not be involved in the appointment process.

Systems and processes for financial administration, financial control and protection of the Authority's resources and assets are designed and monitored to conform with appropriate ethical standards.

Respecting the rule of the law

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

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 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 the Constitution.

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.

The Council has designated a **Chief Finance Officer**, in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, who is a member of the Corporate Leadership Team. 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)**. The Council's **Chief Finance Officer**, has responsibility for the legality of the Council's financial transactions.

The **Contract Procedure Rules** set out the protocols by which the Council shall enter into Contracts in accordance with both UK and EU regulations.

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.

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.

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.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Openness

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

The Council publishes a wide range of information, statistics and data in accordance with, and indeed beyond the expectations of, the Local Government Transparency Code (2015).

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.

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.

Council decisions are based on public **consultation** including the budget proposals. Meetings where decisions are made and scrutinised are open to the public, except where exempt information is disclosed. Those making decisions, whether for the Authority or in partnership, are required to be 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.

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

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

Trafford Council is a member of the **Greater Manchester Combined Authority**, run jointly by the leaders from the 10 councils governed by a fully elected mayor, working with other local services, business and community to improve the city region with powers and accountabilities that bring decision making closer to the local people.

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. Four **Locality Partnerships** act as wider engagement networks for all stakeholders including residents and community groups. Each has its own Terms of Reference and The Locality Partnership Chairs sit on the Trafford Partnership **Strong Communities Board**.

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**.

The Council set up wholly owned community interest companies (CIC), **Trafford Leisure** from 1st Oct 2015 to deliver leisure services across the borough and **Trafford Youth Trust** on 1st March 2016 to commission and develop youth service provision. Each company has a Board of Directors appointed responsible for compliance with general company law and CIC regulatory requirements.

When working in partnership, members are clear about their roles and responsibilities individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and the authority.

Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

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

The **Strategy for Building Strong Communities** provides a strategic 'home' for the Locality Working programme, clearly demonstrating how Locality Working is intrinsically linked with other key strategic agendas, providing a practical way of delivering Early Help and Prevention, Public Service Reform, Shaping Demand, Community Action and Third Sector Infrastructure Support. Through **Asset Based Community Development** Locality projects align strategic priorities to the needs and assets of the communities,

Through the Trafford partnership structure, each **Locality Partnership** is supported by an **Enabling Group** with a core membership of Councillors, Service Providers and Community Ambassadors to oversee engagement events and locality projects and to ensure the work of the Locality Partnerships are aligned to the strategic priorities of the borough.

Through the '**Be Bold be the Difference**' campaign, a range of training/awareness sessions have been rolled out to staff working with the community to understand how community groups can function alongside the Council to achieve shared goals. **Community Builders** and **Community Connectors** are in place to connect people in neighbourhoods so that all resources working in localities have a common understanding of what's available

The Council undertakes regular consultation in relation to policy change and spending proposals. There are a range of consultation mechanisms in place for public and Council employees including an online forum, network events, focus group and surveys.

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

Defining outcomes

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

A refreshed borough wide long term 'Vision 2031', 'Together Trafford', was agreed during 2016/17 based on the premise, '**No one will be held back and no one left behind**'. To support this a Place based strategy is being developed based on the key principles:

- **People** – the council will help residents to help themselves and each other
- **Place** – to create a place where people want to live, stay, learn, work and relax.

To support the vision, a number of interventions have been developed which underpin the Council's **Annual Delivery Plan** and **Medium Term Financial Plan**.

These will be underpinned by the key strategies and programmes setting out how the Council in collaboration with partners proposes to create a sustainable borough

The **Core Strategy** agreed in 2012 sets out the Council's spatial policy framework for delivering the development and change needed to realise the Council's vision for the Borough up to 2026. It includes plans relating to economic, social and environmental issues and how these will shape the future of Trafford.

As part of the wider Greater Manchester Health & Social care devolution, the **Trafford Locality Plan** developed in collaboration with the Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group was agreed in March 2016. This sets out the vision and principles for development of a fully integrated health & social care system to be implemented by 2020.

Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

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

The Council's **Medium Term Financial Strategy** provides a rolling 3 year plan aligned to the authority's strategic objectives and includes a:

- **Medium Term Financial Plan** which details the Council's revenue budget
- 3 year **Capital Programme** and developing Investment Strategy
- **Treasury Management Strategy.**
- **Efficiency Plan** which details the Council's approach to deliver efficiencies with all of this underpinned by a set of **Prudential Indicators**, designed to ensure capital borrowing is affordable and does not place undue burden on the Councils revenue budget.

Trafford continues to develop a multi-year **Locality Plan** which sets out the transformational change in conjunction with health partners to deliver health and social care integration.

To support longer term decision making, **committee reports** require that proposed options set out any implications in relation to the policy framework, corporate priorities, financial, legal, resource and sustainability issues as well as equality and diversity, and health & wellbeing. The report should indicate also whether consultation is required on the outcome of the decision

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Council complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty to consider the needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality when making decisions regarding its service provision and policies. 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.

The Council is a signatory to the **GMCA Social Value Policy** and has developed its own Social Value guidance for staff and suppliers which demonstrates a commitment to obtaining additional social value in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 from its third party controllable spend.

The Council has also developed its own response to the GMCA SV Policy designed to help potential bidders understand more about social value and how to make social value commitments when bidding for a contract with Trafford Council.

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

Determining interventions

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

To support decision making, the **committee reporting** templates require officers to set out the proposed decision and alternative courses of action supported by robust analysis of available options. All proposals are subject to sign off by Finance and Legal, Corporate Director and Executive portfolio holder.

The Council's **budget setting process** is informed by public consultation and through the annual **budget scrutiny review** considers risks and robustness of policy choices, with feedback used to inform policy decisions.

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.

The TraffordDataLab **website** provides free public access to view statistical data about the borough including the **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** which Trafford Council and Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group have equal and joint duties to prepare under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The **Trafford Data Lab** and **Performance teams** provide data and analysis to support the (re)design of services, reduction and reshaping of demand on services and attracting investment into the Borough.

Planning interventions

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

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 Leadership Team (CLT), Executive and Scrutiny Committee** receive regular monitoring and exception reports on the achievement of corporate objectives. In addition, regular performance reports are issued to Corporate Directors and Executive Portfolio holders containing performance data specific to their remit.

The **Programme Management Office (PMO)** defines and maintains standards for managing Transformation projects, to co-ordinate management information, provide best practice advice, guidance and templates for project management through the **Business Change Project lifecycle**, and to provide specialist consultancy in areas such as business case development, risk management and benefits realisation.

The **Transformation Programme** has defined programme governance arrangements in place. Significant projects for the Council have a Corporate Leadership Team lead, and all have a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and Financial Support Officer. Benefits realisation tracking and a summary of project delivery and exceptions is reported monthly to the Transformation Board.

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

- Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints
- Ensuring the budget process is all inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations in the medium and longer term
- Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets out the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responds to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimizing resource usage
- Ensuring the achievement of social value through planning and commissioning services. The Public Services (social value) Act 2012 states that this is ‘the additional benefit to the community over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes

The Council’s **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)** is a 3 year rolling document updated as changes in conditions / assumptions are known. The Council is required to set and approve a balanced robust budget and Council Tax level, and consults annually on its budget proposals which are subject to scrutiny review.

The budget setting process takes into consideration the assessment by the Chief Finance Officer of the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of the general reserve; Executive responses to the scrutiny review; outcome of staff and Trade Union consultation; and Equality Impact Assessment in relation to each proposal.

The Council has established a collaborative Procurement shared service organisation with Stockport and Rochdale Councils (STAR Procurement), with the aim to reduce overheads, increase economies of scale and provide collective expertise and resilience.

The Authority has agreed a **Procurement Strategy** which establishes how the councils can use procurement to focus activity on delivery of outcomes and realise corporate priorities, and highlights the importance of the procurement function throughout the lifecycle of service delivery, from initial inception through to contract management

In response to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has written a **Social Value Policy** which sets out how councils can increase prosperity of their local communities through procurement activity as an added benefit. STAR Procurement has produced local guidance to support this. All tenders advertised by **STAR Procurement** aim to capture social value aligned to the delivery of service, goods and work contracts.

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

Developing the entity's capacity

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

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 for both internal and collaborative working arrangements. Management information is available to enable monitoring of service quality effectively and regularly. The Council is committed to using benchmarking and seeks external advice where necessary to inform decisions.

As part of the **Greater Manchester Devolution** and supporting work programmes, and at local level through the **Vision 2031** and **Health Integration** Transformation programmes, the Council is committed to deliver service transformation through collaboration and integration. Programme management and governance is in place to deliver transformational change.

The **Transformation Programme** takes into account consideration of training and development needs across the Council providing skills transfer across the organisation.

A succession planning strategy formalises an approach to ensure that key skills are not lost to the Council whilst up-skilling staff to take on higher graded roles. Successors will be identified at senior manager level and targeted development initiatives provided to ensure that the Council is equipped to flex the workforce to react to resource and skills gaps.

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

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

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, sets out responsibility for carrying out the Council's functions, at committee level and delegation to individual executive members and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. The sections on delegated authority are reviewed and approved annually.

Member Officer Relations Protocols provide guidance to help build good working relations between members and officers. 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.

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.

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.

All new employees are required to complete a **Corporate Induction Module** which includes a number of mandatory elements such as the employees' code of conduct, fraud awareness and the Acceptable Use Policy. **Member Induction Training** is undertaken each year.

and encouraged.

- Ensuring members and officers have appropriate skills, knowledge and resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis
- Ensuring personal, organisational and system wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weakness both internal and external
- Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.

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. **One to one meeting guidance** and a template to record discussions has been made available for managers so that a consistent approach to supervision is adopted across the Council.

The Council has taken a strategic approach to **Absence Management**. Ongoing performance is monitored as part of the Authority's Annual Delivery Plan.

The supplementary **Member Development Strategy** describes how Councillors will be supported to develop in their changing role as community advocates and leaders. **Personal Development Reviews** are being undertaken to ensure that members are provided with the necessary training and development support.

The Council operates an **Internal Apprenticeship Scheme** providing training and mentoring opportunities for Trafford residents. There are 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 through the **Locality Partnership** networks and involvement in co-produced locality projects which provide innovative solutions to local issues.

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

Managing risk

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

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.

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, Corporate Directors and the Accounts and Audit Committee review the associated arrangements in place for improving control and mitigating risks faced by the Council.

To support change, **Programme Management** ensures that risk logs are maintained for each project which track emerging/ risk issues through the lifetime of the project and ensure where necessary these are escalated to senior management.

The Council's **Business Continuity Management** procedure requires each service area to produce an annual **Business Impact Analysis** to identify the risks to the Council in relation to service continuity which inform development of **Business Continuity Plans** for priority service functions.

The **Health & Safety Policy** sets out the council's approach and responsibilities, including risk assessment and incident reporting processes. The Council's **Health and Safety Unit** provide oversight and support this through provision of advice and training, and monitoring compliance, with regular updates to CLT and the Executive.

Managing performance

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

The Council's **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 Leadership Team (CLT)** 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 Council has in place a **Scrutiny Committee** and a separate **Health Scrutiny Committee**, which 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.

The Council has an approved **Corporate Complaints Policy** and guidance with regular reporting to senior management.

Robust internal control

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

Operational managers have responsibility for managing risks and ensuring implementation of sound system of internal control within their service area.

The Audit and Assurance Service delivers the Council's **Internal Audit** function which is responsible for reviewing the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control, risk management and governance. It operates in general conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010).

The Council operates an **Accounts and Audit Committee** whose role is to monitor and evaluate the Council's corporate governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. The committee regularly reviews its work practices against the guidance set out by CIPFA.

A risk based **Internal Audit work plan** is reviewed each year by the Corporate Leadership Team and Accounts & Audit Committee. The Audit and Assurance Manager reports through the year on progress against plan, outcomes of individual audit reviews and the impact of audit work.

The **Annual Head of Internal Audit Report** presented to the Accounts and Audit Committee provides an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the control environment, which encompasses internal control, risk management and governance.

Managing data

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

To ensure the Authority meets best practice and legislative requirements, an **Information Security Governance Board** has been established which meets regularly to provide strategic direction and oversight of Information governance across the council. The Board has been overseeing preparations for the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which will be introduced from 25 May 2018.

The Senior Risk Information Officer has been assigned to oversee and review information governance issues / information risks and information security, and a **Caldicott Guardian** with responsibility to protect service user and carers' interests regarding the use of confidential and personally identifiable data. A **Data Protection Officer** as required by the GDPR has been appointed.

The Council has adopted an **Information Governance Framework** supported by a suite of policies supported by awareness raising and mandatory annual staff training in data protection, freedom of information and information security.

The Council is working with **GM Connect** and Greater Manchester authorities, Trafford CCG and other partners to implement and monitor effective data sharing throughout Greater Manchester. Although **Data Sharing agreements and protocols** have been adopted based on the GM wide model, they require further amendments to be compliant when GDPR is effective from May 2018.

To ensure compliance with **Data Protection and Freedom of Information** legislation, the Council has adopted a policy, procedures and a dedicated Information Governance team to provide support and guidance to employees.

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.

The Council has engaged a third party provider to provide IT Security capacity and capability working with the in house ICT service to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place, monitor the firewall perimeters and provide accredited security advice. A best practice review of **IT Security policies** has been undertaken aligned to the recommendations from the Information Commissioners Office's Audit.

Trafford Council is compliant with **Public Sector Network (PSN)** requirements and as such subject to independent penetration testing on both the internal and external network.

The Council has assigned **Information Asset Owners** who are responsible for ensuring information quality and security for their service areas and to maintain an **Information Asset Register**.

The Council has adopted a **Records Management Policy** and has a comprehensive records retention and disposal schedule covering all services.

Case File Recording Policies are in place to ensure the accuracy of service user information for systems that support the provision of care. Data analyst and performance staff regularly review data quality for key systems.

Strong public financial management

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

The Council's **Medium Term Financial Strategy** provides a rolling 3 year plan aligned to the authority's strategic objectives. The **Efficiency Plan** sets out the Council's approach to deliver efficiencies over a 4 year period.

The Council has a clearly defined 3 year **Capital Programme** and **Treasury Management Strategy**. The Council **Prudential Indicators** are designed to ensure capital borrowing is affordable and does not place undue burden on the Councils revenue budget. This will be updated at least annually as part of the budget setting process.

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 capital budget is monitored and reported to the CLT and Executive each quarter.

The Authority has defined **Budgetary Control Procedures** in place. **Revenue Budget Monitoring** reports are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive on a regular 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 Accounts and Audit Committee also receives the budget monitoring reports at its meetings through the year.

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

Implementing good practice in transparency

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

The Council has policies and procedures in place to support compliance with the **Freedom of Information Act 2000** requirements and has a Publication Scheme in place.

The Council publishes a range of information to support the requirements of the **Local Government Transparency Code**. Details of all invoice payments to suppliers, senior officer salaries, contract register and members' expense claims are published online.

The Council has a corporate **Marketing and Communications function** in place to oversee internal and external communication and ensure these arrangements are operating effectively. Guidance to members and officers has been provided in relation to press releases, use of the Council logo and social media.

The Council has a range of communication channels in place through its website **trafford.gov.uk**, social media channels and press releases. Face to face and telephone contact is provided through the **Access Trafford contact centre**, and a network of libraries. Webcast of full Council meetings are available live and on demand through the **Public-i website**

An assessment of service user needs has been carried out as part of the Council's work to implement the **Accessible Information Standards** for health & social care.

Implementing good practices in reporting

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

The Council publishes details of its strategy and performance plans on its website **trafford.gov.uk**. Quarterly performance reports against the Annual Delivery Plan are reported to the CLT, Executive and Scrutiny Committee, and published online.

Regular updates on the Council's financial position are reported to CLT, Executive and Accounts & Audit Committee. The Annual Financial Statements, revenue and capital budget reports, Treasury Management updates and quarterly financial health indicators are all published on the Council website.

In accordance with statutory requirements the audited Statement of accounts and External Auditor's certificate and audit opinion are made available for inspection and published online.

The authority undertakes an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements against the **CIPFA/SOLACE** framework for Corporate Governance. The Authority's Corporate Governance Code and Annual Governance Statements are published online.

Information in relation to partnership activity and performance is reported through the Trafford Partnership website **traffordpartnership.org.uk**

Assurance and effective accountability

- Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon
- Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations acted upon
- Welcoming peer challenge, review and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations
- Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through 3rd parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement
- Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met

The **External Auditor's Annual Governance Report** and Annual Audit Letter are reported to the Accounts & Audit Committee and published online.

The Audit and Assurance Manager reports quarterly to the **Accounts and Audit Committee** on progress against the Internal Audit work plan, and provides assurance in relation to the effectiveness of the control environment and acceptance and implementation of audit recommendations. **For individual Internal Audit** reviews, findings are reported to the relevant managers, Heads of Service, Corporate Director, Chief Executive, Executive Portfolio holder and External Auditor.

The Authority is subject to periodic inspection by external bodies including **OFSTED** and **Care Quality Commission**. Inspection findings are published on line and action taken to address any recommendations made.

The Authority's **Annual Governance Statement (AGS)** identifies significant governance issues including risks in relation to 3rd party delivery and sets out the Authority's commitment to continuous improvement. The Accounts and Audit Committee receives updates in relation to issues within the AGS.