	Governance and Audit Committee	Item
		11
	24 November 2020	

Report of	**Monitoring Officer**	**Author**	**Andrew Weavers** ☎ **282213**

Title	**Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance**

Wards affected Not applicable

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report requests the Committee to review the Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2020/21. The Local Code of Corporate Governance is how the Council demonstrates that its structures comply with the recognised principles of good governance.

1.2 The report also recommends that Full Council includes the Code in its Policy Framework which comprises all of the Authority's key polices.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 To review the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2020/21.

2.2 To recommend to Full Council that it be approved for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.

3. Background

3.1 In 2007 CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) issued "Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities", a guide to ensuring that local authorities are appropriately governed. This was updated in December 2012.

3.2 Governance is defined as the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which an organisation is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads their communities. It is about how Colchester Borough Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner

3.3 The Council strives to meet the highest standards of corporate governance to help ensure it meets its objectives. Councillors and Officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Council's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

3.4 Therefore a Local Code of Corporate Governance has been developed to ensure that the Council complies with the principles set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance. The Local Code is reviewed annually, to ensure that the Council is still satisfying the principles, and forms part of the Council's Policy Framework.

3.5 The guidance identifies six Core Principles against which local authorities should review their existing corporate governance arrangements and develop and maintain a local code of governance. The principles are;

- Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- Councillors 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; and
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

3.6 The six core principles each have a number of supporting principles, which in turn have a range of specific requirements that apply across the range of Council business.

3.7 The Local Code, and the Council's compliance with the principles, have been reviewed, and attached at Appendix 1 is the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2020/21. This sets out the six principles and elaborates on how the Council is meeting them, what source documents or processes evidence this and in addition highlights any further or ongoing work. This in turn links into the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

3.8 The Local Code has been updated to reflect the implementation of the Council's two new panels - Environment & Sustainability and Policy, the engagement with the community via the Digital Access programme, development of virtual training for officers and the Coronavirus response and recovery actions. Otherwise there have been no significant changes to the Local Code following the review, and it is considered still fit for purpose.

4. Strategic Plan References

4.1 The manner in which the Council governs its business is an underpinning mechanism in the Council's Strategic Plan priorities to set out the direction and future potential for our Borough.

5. Publicity Considerations

5.1 The Local Code of Corporate Governance will be published on Corporate Governance section of the Council's website.

6. Financial, Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Consultation, Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Environmental and Sustainability Implications

6.1 None.

Code of Corporate Governance 2020/21

A guide to the Council's compliance with the six principles of Corporate Governance.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Core Principle 1   *Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.*

Core Principle 2   *Members and officers working together to deliver the objectives of the Strategic Plan (the common purpose) with clearly defined functions and roles.*

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

Core Principle 4   *Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.*

Core Principle 5   *Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.*

Core Principle 6   *Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.*

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

"Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way for everyone, 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".

Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities (CIPFA/SOLACE 2007)

The CIPFA/SOLACE guidance "Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities" identified six Core Principles against which local authorities should review their existing corporate governance arrangements and develop and maintain a local code of governance. These principles are:

1. *Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area*
2. *Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles*
3. *Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour*
4. *Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk*
5. *Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective*
6. *Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.*

This Code of Governance has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance and will be reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee on an annual basis.

Additionally authorities are required to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with this framework under Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2011. The Annual Governance Statement is a key corporate document. The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council have joint responsibility as signatories for its accuracy and completeness.

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PRINCIPLE ONE

Core Principle 1 – Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

Our aims in relation to focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area are to:

1.1 Exercise strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose, vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users
1.2 Ensure users receive a high quality service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning
1.3 Ensure that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
1.1.1 Develop and promote the Council's purpose and vision	Strategic Plan 2018-21 (approved by Full Council February 2018 following consultation and focus groups, with 20 priorities now set out under four new themes) and action plan. This was superseded by the Strategic Plan 2020-23 in October 2020, with full-year results against the 2018/19 and 2019/20 action plans here. The Council's commercial programme, including the set-up of three trading subsidiaries – Amphora Trading, Homes and Energy – within the Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Ltd (CCH) holding company. Partnership working with local, regional and national stakeholders. Service Plans. ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy. Council website – www.colchester.gov.uk.	Development and monitoring of actions to support delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-23, approved by Full Council October 2020, including spending priorities.

The development of the CCH/Amphora companies, and the implementation of their high-level goals, financial targets and management agreements.

Encouraging self-serve and online options to maximise use of resources

Council's Research and Change Team review customer demand and feedback, |

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	Local Research and Statistics data on website. The Constitution and its committees and panels. Core values of 'customer, business and culture' with identified attitudes and behaviours Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported and published to show achievements against targets The Council's strategies and policies. <u>Awards and accreditations.</u> Publication Scheme/Transparency Code. The 'Service Futures' programme which took a fundamental review of Council services and how they are delivered.	statistics and research to support business improvement. Council website – continuing its development to support the Council's vision and objectives, including focus on online self-serve options. <u>Digital Access Team</u> – external funding secured to help customers get online so they can access self-serve options and information to support themselves and the digital opportunities available if customers use the web.
1.1.2 Review on a regular basis the Council's vision for the local area and its impact on the authority's governance arrangements	Strategic Plan and its Action Plan. The Constitution and its committees and panels. Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme. Local Code of Corporate Governance. Annual Governance Statement and Assurance Framework. Risk Register.	Development and monitoring of actions to support delivery of the <u>Strategic Plan 2020-23</u>, approved by Full Council October 2020, including spending priorities. Local Code of Corporate Governance updated as required by CIPFA Guidance The Policy Panel was introduced in July 2020 to provide legislative, improvement and policy advice to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders on issues that may affect executive functions. The Panel considers issues at the request of Cabinet and Portfolio Holders and must seek approval from Cabinet on whether and how issues

		proactively identified by the Panel are examined. The Environment and Sustainability Panel was also introduced in July 2020, on the same basis as the Policy Panel, but to provide Colchester's response to the climate emergency.
In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	**Source documents/Processes**	**Further work ongoing**
1.1.3 Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties	Strategic Plan 2018-21 Partners were key contributors in the Peer Challenge Partnership Strategy Council praised by All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into partnership working Safer Colchester Partnership – annual plan, website, strategic and operational groups Working with a range of partners to provide customer-facing services.	Colchester Ambassadors – key borough businesses and their promotional work. Crime and Disorder Committee examines the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership.
1.1.4 Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance	Strategic Plan actions and monitoring of delivery Statement of Accounts Council's website www.colchester.gov.uk Awards and accreditations, Performance and Improvement sections of the website Performance Management Board ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy The Council's Forward Plan Publication Scheme/Transparency Code All Annual Reports into one place on the website for improved transparency and open access.	

	An online Datashare 'library' gives access to view and download a range of council databases and information	
1.2.1 Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available	Customer – Portfolio Holder on the Cabinet Performance reporting to Senior Management , Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet Consultation – "Consultations, Research and Statistics" section on website Mosaic and other customer research tools Annual Monitoring Report External Audit annual audit letter and recommendations Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter Review of Complaints Procedure (to Committee October 2018)	Research and Change Team review customer demand and feedback, statistics and research to encourage services to make informed choices based on fact, and support process improvement work council-wide. 'Customer' strand of the Council's Customer Service Standard. 'Customers and Partnerships' strand of Senior Management Team meetings – this meeting aims to ensure we are focused on our customers and looking for partnership opportunities. Feedback tab on webpages 'Help us get it right' options for customers

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/processes	Further work ongoing
1.2.2 Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery	Performance reporting and performance indicators Complaints Procedure Internal Audit Process and annual work programme Chief Operating Officer Performance Management Board External Auditor's annual audit letter and recommendations The Constitution, its committees and panels Risk Management Strategy Ethical Governance Policies Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Review of Complaints Procedure	Performance Management Board addresses and manages performance and financial issues and meets monthly. Preparation for Budget Group is also managed here. 'Help us get it right' options for customers
1.3.1 Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	Performance Reporting Performance Management Board Environmental Sustainability Strategy/Actions External Auditor's annual audit letter and recommendations Statement of Accounts Annual Treasury Strategy Statement Parking Partnership annual report Report templates – financial considerations Monitoring of commercial performance Publication Scheme/Transparency Code Sustainability assessments for Local Plan	Building a sustainable commercial services arm for the Council – CCHL/Amphora trading companies. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has established an Environment and Sustainability Committee. This is an advisory Panel to Cabinet looking at how the Council should respond to the climate emergency.

		All Council decision making reports require an assessment of the environmental and sustainability implications of the decision.

PRINCIPLE TWO

Members and officers working together to deliver the objectives of the Strategic Plan (the common purpose) with clearly defined functions and roles.

Our aims in relation to Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles are to:

2.1 Ensure effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function
2.2 Ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard
2.3 Ensure relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
2.1.1 Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice	Constitution (Cabinet terms of reference) Record of decisions and supporting materials Member/Officer Protocol Member Training and Development Senior officer training Member role profiles Committee and Councillor area on the Council website Publication Scheme/Transparency Code	The Constitution will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis.
2.1.2 Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers	Constitution (Statutory Officer positions, Terms of Reference for Committees, Member roles) Protocols on planning, the representational role of Members, Chairmen, Officer/Members Schemes of Delegation Terms and Conditions of Employment Member role profiles	.

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
2.2.2 Make the chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management	Development of the Committee and Councillor area on the Council website provides more complete and easily accessible information about Councillors and the Council's decision making processes. Chief Executive designated Head of Paid Service Constitution (Head of Paid Service responsibilities) Conditions of Employment Schemes of Delegation Job Accountability Statement /Person Specification Signature on Annual Governance Statement	The Constitution will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis. Support for this from Chief Operating Officer
2.2.3 Develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	Constitution Member/Officer Protocol Regular 1:2:1s	The Constitution will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis. The development of the CCHL/Amphora companies, and the implementation of their high-level goals, financial targets and management agreements.
2.2.4 Make a senior officer (usually the section 151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control	Strategic Finance Manager is the Council's Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer). Constitution Job Accountability Statement / Person Specification S151 Officer Protocol Report template includes financial implications before report considered by Members Officer Pay Policy agreed by Full Council	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
2.2.5 Make a senior officer (other than the responsible financial officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations are complied with (usually the Monitoring Officer)	Strategic Governance Manager is the Council's Monitoring Officer Monitoring Officer Protocol Job Accountability Statement / Person Specification Report template requires that Legal Services are consulted before a report is considered by Members	
2.3.1 Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles	Member / Officer Protocol Planning Procedures Code of Practice Outside Bodies advice given to Members Member and Officer Codes of Conduct	Portfolio Holder briefings
2.3.2 Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable)	Pay and conditions policies and practices Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference and Reports Regular liaison meeting with Unison Officer Pay Policy agreed by Full Council	
2.3.3 Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery	Performance reporting and performance indicators Complaints Procedure Assistant Directors monitoring Service Plans Performance Management Board Performance management system Scrutiny Panel Annual Governance Statements for the Council, Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service and North Essex Parking Partnership Publication Scheme/Transparency Code Datashare	Customers and Partnerships' strand of Senior Management Team meetings Customer insight work

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
2.3.4 Ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated	Strategic Plan underpinned by a review of all existing consultation work. Medium Term Financial Strategy Performance reporting and indicators Council Website ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy News releases, e-newsletters and social media Customer insight groups Service Reviews	Policy Panel set up to provide legislative, improvement and policy advice to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders on issues that may affect executive functions. Environment and Sustainability Panel set up on the same basis as the Policy Panel, but to provide Colchester's response to the climate emergency. Cabinet identifying and resourcing new strategic priorities.
2.3.5 When working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority	Constitution Individual Partnership Agreements Service Level Agreements Advice given to Members in relation to outside bodies Partnership Strategy	Scrutiny Panel work programme includes review of partnership arrangements, with presentations from partners at Scrutiny
2.3.6 When working in partnership: • ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership • ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.	Constitution Individual Partnership Agreements Service Level Agreements Advice given to Members in relation to outside bodies Partnership Strategy Monitoring Officer role and protocol	Customers and Partnerships' strand of Senior Management Team meetings

PRINCIPLE THREE

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

Our aims in relation to promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour are to:

3.1   Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance
3.2   Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.1.1 Ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect	Constitution Chief Executive's and Leader's blog on intranet Performance reporting Governance and Audit Committee has an overall view of conduct issues established by its terms of reference Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Member/Officer Protocol Whistleblowing Policy Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Freedom of Information Policy statement and publication scheme Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer Protocols Localism Act Member conduct regime Annual review of Ethical Governance policies Peer Challenge	Staff survey and taking action on its findings Leadership Development Programme led by Executive Management Team Social media, including Yammer Regular staff news bulletins by email Information and videos on intranet Employee Assistance Programme Staff Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aiders

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In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.1.1 continued	Planning Procedures Code of Practice Officer Register of Gifts and Hospitality Officer voluntary register of interests Members' Register of Interests Website and intranet Portfolio Holder monthly sessions with senior officers "Corporate Governance" section on the Council's website bringing all relevant information together under one heading Datashare	
3.1.2 Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Performance management system Complaints procedures Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy Member/Officer Protocols Induction for new Members and staff Member Development Programme Officer training on Member/ officer relationship Whistleblowing Policy Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Security Policy Safeguarding Policy Intranet Annual review of Ethical Governance policies Review of Complaints Procedure	Embedding the Council's core values of 'customer, business and culture' with identified attitudes and behaviours. The Job Accountability Statement/Person Specification template highlights the core values to applicants, and the staff appraisal scheme makes how you conduct yourself against the values, attitudes and behaviours to be equally important to achieving the SMART objectives that apply to the role.

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In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.1.3 Put in place arrangements 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 processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Equality and Diversity training for Members and Officers Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules Ethical Governance policies Registers of Interests (Officers and Members) Services and processes are underpinned by Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives Officer induction and training Annual review of Ethical Governance Policies Job Accountability Statements include whether or not a role is politically restricted	Response to consultation on revised Member Code of Conduct.
3.2.1 Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values both for the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Strategic Plan, objectives and priorities in place and shared Performance reporting Strategic Plan Action Plan – progress is reported to scrutiny on a half-yearly basis	People Strategy actions (existing) and 2020 update Embedding the Council's core values of 'customer, business and culture' with identified attitudes and behaviours
3.2.2 Put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice	Contract Procedure Rules Ethical Governance Policies Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Monitoring of the above takes place by the Governance and Audit Committee ICT Security Policy Annual reporting to Governance and Audit Committee	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.2.3 Develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee	Member conduct issues (standards) within remit of Governance and Audit Committee Agenda and Minutes Terms of Reference Regular meetings Member training on Code of Conduct Work programme	Annual review of the Localism Act arrangements by the Governance and Audit Committee.
3.2.4 Use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Strategic Plan, objectives and priorities in place and being shared Performance Appraisals Portfolio Holder briefing with Senior Managers Policy Framework	Embedding the Council's core values of 'customer, business and culture' with identified attitudes and behaviours
3.2.5 In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively	Values agreed with each partner Partnership Strategy	Annual report to Cabinet on Members' appointments to outside bodies, including feedback on outcomes, issues and engagement Scrutiny Panel work programme includes review of partnership arrangements, with presentations from partners at Scrutiny

PRINCIPLE FOUR

Core Principle 4 – Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Our aims in taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk are to:

4.1   Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcomes of constructive scrutiny
4.2   Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs
4.3   Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place
4.4   Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their areas

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
4.1.1. Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the organisation's performance overall and of any organisation for which it is responsible	Scrutiny is supported by robust evidence and data analysis Agenda and Minutes Scrutiny Panel Work programme Successful outcome of reviews Ownership of work programme Training for scrutiny chairman and members Scrutiny of partners and joint projects	Scrutiny Panel has continued to meet remotely during the course of the Covid 19 pandemic. Scrutiny Panel work programme includes review of partnership arrangements, with presentations from partners at Scrutiny Specialised training provided to Scrutiny members on the scrutiny of commercial companies and treasury management
4.1.2 Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based	The Constitution, its committees and panels Decision making protocols Record of decisions and supporting materials Report template Decision list published (members) Live streaming of meetings via YouTube	Decision making meetings have been held remotely and have continued through the Covid 19 pandemic. Meetings have been live streamed through YouTube leading to greater public engagement.

	Website	
		The Policy Panel has been set up to provide legislative, improvement and policy advice to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders on issues that may affect executive functions. The Environment and Sustainability Panel was also introduced in July 2020, on the same basis as the Policy Panel, but to provide Colchester's response to the climate emergency.

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
4.1.3 Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Member and Officer Registers of Interests Declaration of Interests at meetings Code of Conduct guidance and training provided to Members and Officers Planning procedures Code of Practice Governance and Audit Committee (responsibility) and Monitoring Officer (reports) Politically restricted posts Ethical Governance Policies, and annual review Secondary Employment Policy	
4.1.4 Develop and maintain an effective Audit Committee (or equivalent) which is independent or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee	Audit issues within remit of Governance and Audit Committee Member Development Programme Agenda and Minutes The Constitution	Continue to review Member training programme with specific reference to audit and governance

4.1.5 Put in place effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints	Complaints procedure "Help us get it right" on website with full details Annual letter from Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Customer insight work Social media Review of Complaints Procedure	
4.2.1 Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications	Council's Website Report templates dealing with key aspects Report by Assistant Director with necessary technical expertise included Training and professional development Equality Impact Assessments Clear and well understood decision-making processes with published timelines Publication Scheme and Transparency Code Datashare	Projects carried out by the Council's Research and Change Team Customer insight work Introduction of a requirement that all decision making reports must address the environmental and sustainability implications of the decision.

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
4.2.2 Ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately	Report template requires that consultation is undertaken with legal and financial functions before report considered by Members Record of decision making and supporting materials S151 and Monitoring Officer Protocols Equality Impact Assessments Clear and well understood decision making processes with published timelines.	Business Partners for Corporate and Improvement Services, including legal and financial matters
4.3.1 Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the organisation, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job	Risk Management Strategy - Policy Framework Corporate Risk Manager Corporate/service planning Cabinet Member with accountability for risk management Half-yearly reporting to Governance and Audit Committee Performance Management Board quarterly risk review Risk Registers- Strategic, Operational and Project Risk and Control self-assessment completed by all managers Training for Members and Officers Intranet area for Risk Management Corporate Governance Team, bringing together the co-ordination of governance processes.	Embedding of risk management processes into projects, with a review of what constitutes a significant project Integrating operational, strategic and project risks into the risk reporting process to senior management
In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	**Source documents/Processes**	**Further work ongoing**
4.4.1 Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example the	Constitution Monitoring Officer	

ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities	Report templates Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives	
4.4.2 Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law	Availability of professional legal advice Knowledge of current and forthcoming legislation and regulations Monitoring Officer Protocol S151 Officer Protocol Report templates Constitution Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives Training and Policy updates	Business Partners for Corporate and Improvement Services, including legal and financial matters
4.4.3 Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice into their procedures and decision making processes	Availability of professional legal advice Knowledge of current and forthcoming legislation and regulations Monitoring Officer Protocol S151 Officer Protocol Procedure Rules Report template Constitution Format for quasi-judicial committees "Have Your Say" processes Planning Procedure Code of Practice Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives Datashare	Business Partners for Corporate and Improvement Services, including legal and financial matters

PRINCIPLE FIVE

Core Principle 5 – Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

Our aims in relation to developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective are:

5.1   Making sure that Members and Officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles
5.2   Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as an individual and as a group
5.3   Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
5.1.1 Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Members and Officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis	Member training and development Member training records on the website Member and Officer Induction programmes Refresher courses Briefings Performance reviews for officers People Strategy Personal Development Plans Learning and Development Strategy Charter Status for Elected Member Development renewed July 2018 (re-assessed every 3 years)	Member skills development Intranet section with e-induction options and information for new starters. Learning and Development section on the intranet is now a 'one stop shop' for staff e-learning – from induction to essential skills and wellbeing – with new section offering free webinars/resources. Commitment to seek reaccreditation of Member Charter Status in summer 2021
5.1.2 Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary	Appraisals and regular 1 to 1 sessions Personal Development Plans	

to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the organisation	Training and development Recruitment and Induction Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer Protocols Employee Policies Learning and Development Strategy/Annual Learning and Development Plan Talent Management/Career Track for staff Future Leader programme	
In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	**Source documents/Processes**	**Further work ongoing**
5.2.1 Assess the skills required by Members and Officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively	Performance reviews for officers SMART objectives Personal Development Plans for officers Member training and development People Strategy Learning and Development Strategy/Annual Learning and Development Plan Charter Status for Elected Member Development renewed July 2018 (re-assessed every 3 years) Talent Management/Career Track for staff – Senior Management Team considers critical roles; moderate career track paths; confirm Future Leader or Future Potential assessments; and then consider those on the Future Leader career track and manage their development	Member skills development . Specialised training provided to Scrutiny members on the scrutiny of commercial companies and treasury management Commitment to seek reaccreditation of Member Charter Status in summer 2021
5.2.2 Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed	Performance reviews for officers Personal Development Plans for officers Member training and development Member scrutiny training People Strategy Colchester Learning Managers	Member skills development Learning and Development – commercial and Office365 skills Specialised training provided to Scrutiny members on the scrutiny of commercial companies and treasury management

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	Vine HR and East of England Local Government Association – meetings, best practice and briefings Peer Challenge and action plan Charter Status for Elected Member Development renewed July 2018 (re-assessed every 3 years) Talent Management/Career Track for staff	Commitment to seek reaccreditation of Member Charter Status in summer 2021
5.2.3 Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the authority as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might for example aim to address any training or development needs	Performance reporting and indicators Performance and Improvement Framework Performance management and appraisals – staff SMART objectives People Strategy Peer Challenge and action plan Annual Audit Letter Members' Training Needs Analysis Annual Training Plan Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter	Commitment to seek reaccreditation of Member Charter Status in summer 2021

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
5.3.1 Ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority	Equality Impact Assessments on services and policies Consultations, Research and Statistics on website Voluntary Sector Grants programme Community Enabling Strategy Public meetings Equality Objectives Strategic Plan Consultation Local Development Framework consultation Community development work Consultations Customer insight work	Apprenticeship scheme, and encouraging the Council's apprentices to take part in elections work Locality Budgets Use of social media Maintaining the Council's commitment to paying the Living Wage as a minimum for its staff including, for example, those helping to support the Council's elections work at polling stations

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	Research and Change Team projects Have Your Say! processes Appointment of Independent Persons Audio streaming of Council meetings The adoption of on-line committee meetings has enabled greater participation from all sections of the community. The viewing figure demonstrate greater public participation than the previous audio recordings. A public consultation provided responses that demonstrated overwhelming support for on-line meetings.	Establishment of Policy Panel and Environment and Sustainability Policy Panel from July 2020 and its work programme. Further review of on-line committee meetings in the future and the development of hybrid meetings.
5.3.2 Ensure that career structures are in place for Members and Officers to encourage participation and development	People Strategy Internal Recruitment Process Internal Secondments Personal Development Plans for officers Personal Development Plans for members Talent Management/Career Track for staff Future Leader Programme Member skills development Staff structure charts	Staff Recognition Scheme – first virtual celebration event held September 2020 Opportunities such as the District Council Staff Development Programme and the Local Authority Challenge as they arise Commitment to LGA Leadership Academy

PRINCIPLE SIX

Core Principle 6 – Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Our aims in relation to engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability are to:

6.1   Exercise leadership through a robust scrutiny function which engages effectively with local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships

6.2   Take an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly, in partnership or by commissioning

6.3   Make best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
6.1.1 Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community, to whom they are accountable and for what	Constitution Community Enabling Strategy Stakeholder identification Targets and Performance Monitoring Website and intranet Consultation work ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy Asset Management Strategy Datashare section on the Council's website brings together all information required under statutory codes such as the 'Local Government Transparency Code' and the Publication Scheme to make this easily accessible Structure charts for senior management	A wide range of information is brought together into one searchable website - www.data.gov.uk – much of this can be downloaded / shows year-on-year data – looking at IT and access improvements. Locality Budgets for councillors have been brought in with clearer guidelines and all spend/activity transparently available on the Council's website.

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
6.1.2 Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom they are accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required	Stakeholder identification Statutory provisions Stakeholder surveys Consultation Strategy ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy Partnership Strategy Scrutiny Panel and the Crime and Disorder Committee Work Programme Datashare	Ongoing review of Freedom of Information requests to see if there are items which could be put onto the website or Datashare, so that a repeat request would not be needed as the item had been made freely available.
6.1.3 Produce an annual report on scrutiny function activity	Annual Scrutiny Report	
6.2.1 Ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders including monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively	ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy News releases, e-newsletters and social media Websites for the Council and subsidiaries Equality Impact Assessments Safeguarding Policies Datashare, Freedom of Information and Data Protection section of the website Recordings of meetings on the website	Coronavirus resources set up March 2020 - have provided a source of latest updates, information, advice and support. The Council's Digital Access Team has a range of activities and actions to support the community with online communication and service access. Social media and text messaging Customer and demand projects
6.2.2 Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality	Constitution Access to Information Rules Compliance with Localism Act access to information regulations Audio streaming of Council meetings	Decision making meetings have been held remotely and have continued through the Covid 19 pandemic. Meetings have been live streamed through YouTube leading to greater public engagement.

6.2.3 Ensure arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands	Strategic Plan Website - "Consultations, Research and Statistics" section Consultation work ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy Community development work Equality Objectives/Equality Impact Assessments Budget Consultation Meeting	Holding public consultations on key issues to encourage different sections with differing views to take part
In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	**Source documents/Processes**	**Further work ongoing**
6.2.4 Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result	Statement of Community Involvement Customer insight project team and its work Partnership framework ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy Consultation Strategy Budget Consultation - meeting and online Strategic Plan consultation Website - "Consultations, Research and Statistics" section Cabinet and Council – progress of questions raised by the public	Policy Panel review of results and data collected in recent surveys and consultations with a view to exploring these in more depth at future meetings as part of the Panel's forward plan
6.2.5 On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period	Statement of Accounts Strategic Plan Strategic Plan Action Plan – progress is reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet on a half-yearly basis Performance Reporting and Indicators Council website has "Performance and Improvement", "Council Awards and Achievements" and "Council and Democracy" sections Publication Scheme and Transparency Code All annual reports into one central place on the Council's website for improved transparency	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
6.2.6 Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so	Constitution Customer service standards Voluntary Sector Compact "Have Your Say" at meetings Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Ethical Governance Policies Monitoring Officer Protocol ICT, Communication and Technology Strategy Data Protection Policy ICT Security Policy Council website Datashare, Freedom of Information and Data Protection section of the website National Fraud Initiative - Fair Processing Notice Egress Switch Secure Email Encryption Publication Scheme and Transparency Code Live Streaming of Council meetings Working with a range of partners to provide customer-facing services.	Security checks on staff who process official/sensitive information using the Public Sector Network or who need a secure GCSX e-mail address
6.3.1 Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making	Investors in People Facilities and Recognition Agreement with UNISON – including monthly meetings. Internal Communications Strategy Service Reviews and other operational reviews include consultation and involvement arrangements as part of the process/staff communications	Staff survey and taking action on its findings Staff involvement – new engagement group being established Investors in People – reaccredited for three years to 2021