



LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Updated: March 2008

INTRODUCTION

1. Each local authority is required to have a Local Code of Corporate Governance. The Council's original code was developed in 2002. It was substantially improved and updated in line with then best practice in 2006 (approved by Council in August 2006). This updated code builds upon the 2005 code and has regard to the CIPFA/SOLACE Corporate Governance Framework which was published in 2007 and assigned 'proper practice' under the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006.
2. Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they do 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, culture 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 (CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, 2007).
- 3 The principles of good corporate governance require the Council to carry out its functions in a way which demonstrates **Openness, Integrity and Accountability**.
- 4 The new governance framework builds upon the principles of conduct in public life, now embodied within the revised (2007) Members' Code of Conduct and defined as:
 - **Selflessness**
 - **Honesty and Integrity**
 - **Objectivity**
 - **Accountability**
 - **Openness**
 - **Personal Judgment**
 - **Respect for Others**
 - **Duty to uphold the Law**
 - **Stewardship**
 - **Leadership**
- 5 Taken together, these principles are defined as follows:
 - **Openness and inclusivity**
Openness is required to ensure that stakeholders can have confidence in the decision-making and management process of local authorities, and in the approach of the individuals within them. Being open through genuine consultation with stakeholders and providing access to full, accurate and clear information leads to effective and timely action and lends itself to necessary scrutiny. Openness also requires an **inclusive** approach, which seeks to

ensure that all stakeholders¹ and potential stakeholders have the opportunity to engage effectively with the decision-making processes and actions of local authorities. It requires an outward focus and a commitment to partnership working. It calls for innovative approaches to consultation and service provision.

- **Integrity**
Integrity comprises both straightforward dealing and completeness. It is based upon **honesty, selflessness** and **objectivity**, and high standards of propriety and probity in the stewardship of public funds and management of an authority's affairs. It is dependent on the effectiveness of the control framework and on the personal standards and professionalism of the members and staff within the authority. It is reflected in the authority's decision-making procedures, in its service delivery and in the quality of its financial and performance reporting.
- **Accountability**
Accountability is the process whereby local authorities, and the members and staff within them, are responsible for their decisions and actions, including their stewardship of public funds and all aspects of performance, and submit themselves to appropriate external scrutiny. It is achieved by all parties having a clear understanding of those responsibilities, and having clearly defined roles through a robust structure.

6 The concept of **Leadership** overarches these three principles. The principles described above can only be adhered to if leadership is exercised through:

- the local authority providing vision for its community and leading by example in its decision-making and other processes and actions
- members and officers conducting themselves in accordance with high standards of conduct

7 The main body of the Code is divided into five sections, each of which covers a particular dimension for the Council's responsibilities in terms of corporate governance. These are:

- **Community Focus**
- **Service Delivery**
- **Management Structures and Processes**
- **Risk Management and Internal Control**
- **Standards of Conduct**

- 8 Under each section, the means by which the Council will meet and demonstrate its commitment to good corporate governance in relation to that particular dimension is exemplified.
- 9 The final part of the document sets out the responsibilities for each of the documentation and processes which underpin the Code. This part has been edited to show amendments and achievements since the 2006 update.

DIMENSION ONE – COMMUNITY FOCUS

2. When carrying out our general and specific duties and responsibilities and through our ability to exert wider influence, Teesdale District Council will:

- work for and with our communities
- exercise leadership in our local communities, where appropriate
- undertake an 'ambassadorial' and advocacy role to promote the well-being of the District through maintaining effective arrangements which:
 - provide explicit **accountability** to stakeholders for our performance and **effectiveness** in the delivery of services and the sustainable use of resources
 - demonstrate **integrity** in our dealings in building effective relationships and partnerships with other public agencies and the private/voluntary sectors
 - demonstrate **openness** in all our dealings
 - demonstrate **inclusivity** by communicating and engaging all sectors of the community
 - develop and articulate a clear and **up-to-date** vision and corporate strategy in response to community needs

The Council will:	Systems / processes / documentation demonstrating compliance
a) publish on a timely basis an annual report presenting an objective, understandable account of the authority's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities and achievements • financial position and performance Such reports to include statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explaining the authorities responsibilities for financial statements • confirming that the authority complies with relevant standards and codes of corporate governance • on the effectiveness of the authority's system for risk management and internal control 	Annual Statement of Accounts Quarterly Financial Monitoring Statements Annual Report Statement of Internal Control Chair of Audit Committee report on Effectiveness of Risk Management Head of Internal Audit's Annual Report
b) publish on a timely basis a performance plan presenting an objective, balanced and understandable account and assessment of the authority's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current performance in service delivery • plans to maintain and improve service quality 	Best Value Performance Plan / Corporate Plan Community Strategy Summary of the Best Value Performance Plan Quarterly Performance Management Reports / Balanced Scorecard
c) put in place proper arrangements for the independent review of the financial and operation reporting processes	Annual Audit Letter Scrutiny Committee Function Independent Plan for Councillor's

	<p>allowances</p> <p>Internal Audit Reports</p> <p>Budget setting process</p> <p>Annual Ombudsman report</p>
<p>d) put in place proper arrangements designed to encourage individuals and groups from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority and put in place appropriate monitoring processes to ensure that they continue to work in practice</p>	<p>Local Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Budget consultation</p> <p>Corporate Plan consultation</p> <p>Resident and customer surveys</p> <p>Questions at Full Council</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny involvement in public consultation</p> <p>Parish Forum</p> <p>Citizen's Panel</p> <p>Complaints procedure</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Consultation Strategy</p>
<p>e) make an explicit commitment to openness in all the Council's dealings, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so and by its actions and communications deliver an account against that commitment</p>	<p>Council Constitution</p> <p>Web-site</p> <p>Publication scheme under Freedom of Information Act</p> <p>Access to Information Act</p> <p>Commitment to Data Protection Act</p> <p>Forward Plan</p> <p>Councillor's Code of Conduct</p>
<p>f) Establish clear channels of communication with all sections of our community and other stakeholders and put in place proper monitoring arrangements to ensure they operate effectively</p>	<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Investors in People Accreditation</p> <p>Communications Strategy</p> <p>Web-site</p> <p>Resident and customer surveys</p> <p>Citizens Panel</p>
<p>g) ensure that a vision for local communities and 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</p>	<p>Local Strategic Partnership</p> <p>Community Strategy</p> <p>Corporate Plan</p> <p>Service Plans</p> <p>Best Value Performance Plan</p> <p>Communications Strategy</p> <p>Consultation Strategy</p>

DIMENSION TWO – SERVICE DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

3. Teesdale District Council will ensure that continuous improvement is sought, agreed policies are implemented and decisions carried out by maintaining arrangements which:

- discharge our **accountability** for service delivery at a local level
- ensure **effectiveness** through setting targets and measuring performance
- demonstrate **integrity** in dealings with service users and developing partnerships to ensure the right provisions of services locally
- demonstrate **openness** and **inclusivity** through consulting with key stakeholders, including service users
- are flexible so that they can be kept **up-to-date** and be adapted to accommodate change and meet users wishes

The Council will:	Systems / processes / documentation demonstrating compliance
a) set standards and targets for performance in the delivery of services on a sustainable basis and with reference to equality policies	Best Value Performance Plan Service Reviews Service Plans (incorporating improvement plans) Equality and Diversity Strategy Access to services strategy Personal Development Reviews Competency Framework Procurement Strategy
b) put in place sound systems for providing management information for performance measurement purposes	Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports
c) monitor and report performance against agreed standards and targets and develop comprehensive and understandable performance plans	Best Value Performance Plan Overview and Scrutiny Reviews Service Plans and Monitoring Reports to Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports
d) put in place arrangements to allocate resources according to priorities	Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan Medium Term Financial Plan Budget Setting Process Corporate Plan Training and Development Strategy Human Resources Strategy (incorporating Workforce Planning Strategy) Service Plans

	Cost Benefit Analysis
e) foster effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors, and consider outsourcing where it is efficient and effective to do so, in delivering services to meet the needs of the local community, and put in place processes to ensure that they operate effectively in practice	Local Strategic Partnership Parish Forum Community Safety Partnership Cost Benefit Analysis / Options Appraisals for services Service Reviews / New Ways of Working Framework
f) respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors and put in place arrangements for the effective implementation of agreed actions	Annual External Audit Management Letter External Audit Reports Inspection reports Best Value Performance Plan Audit Committee to oversee implementation of recommendations

DIMENSION THREE – STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

4. Teesdale District Council recognises the need to establish effective political and managerial structures and processes to govern decision-making and the exercise of authority within the organisation. The Council will maintain arrangements to:

- define the roles and responsibilities of members and officers to ensure **accountability**, clarity and ordering of the authority's business
- ensure that there is proper scrutiny review of all aspects of performance and **effectiveness**
- demonstrate **integrity** by ensuring a proper balance of power and authority
- document clearly such structures and processes to ensure that they are communicated and understood to demonstrate **openness** and **inclusivity**
- ensure such structures and processes are kept **up-to-date** and adapted to accommodate change

The Council will:	Systems / processes / documentation demonstrating compliance
Balance of Power and Authority	
a) put in place clearly document protocols governing relationships between Members and officers	Member / Officer protocol
b) ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of executive and other members, members generally and senior officers are clearly defined	Council Constitution Records of Council, Executive and Overview and Scrutiny decisions
Roles and Responsibilities - Members	
c) ensure that members meet on a formal basis regularly to set the strategic direction of the authority and to monitor service delivery	Schedule of Council Meetings Corporate Management Team Meetings Executive Briefing Meetings Departmental Management Team Meetings Performance Management Framework Contract Procedures and Financial Regulations
d) develop and maintain a scheme of delegated or reserved powers, which should include a formal schedule for those matters specifically reserved for the collective decision of the authority	Constitution sets out the allocation of powers and those reserved for Full Council
e) put in place clearly documented and understood management processes for policy development implementation and review and for decision making, monitoring	Constitution – responsibility for functions Forward Plan Contract regulations and Financial

and control, and reporting; and formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of the authority's business	Regulations Executive Committee Reports Overview and Scrutiny policy development role
f) put in place arrangements to ensure that members are properly trained for their roles and have access to all relevant information, advice and resource as necessary to enable them to carry out their roles effectively	Member Induction Programme Members training and development programme Computers and support provided to Members Member bulletins Members library Overview and Scrutiny Officer Members Charter (action plan)
g) ensure that the role of the Executive Members are formally defined in writing to include responsibility for providing effective strategic leadership to the authority and for ensuring that the authority successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole	Constitution Lead Member Roles (definitions)
h) ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all members of the authority, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly in writing	Constitution – roles and responsibilities Members Allowance Scheme – regularly reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel
Roles and Responsibilities - Officers	
i) ensure that the chief executive is made responsible for all aspects of operational management	Constitution – scheme of delegation Job Descriptions / Person Specifications Performance Development Reviews
j) ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given to it on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control	Chief Finance Officer is designated Section 151 Officer – also a member of the Corporate Management Team Financial Regulations Constitution Job Descriptions / Person Specification Performance Development Reviews
k) ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with	The Constitution sets out the roles and functions of the Monitoring Officer which is also contained in section 5 of the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act (as amended) Chief Governance Officer is designated Monitoring Officer – also a member of the Corporate Management Team Job Descriptions / Person Specification Performance Development Reviews
l) ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all senior officers, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly in writing	Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Regeneration and Director of Customer Services are members of the Corporate Management Team Assistant Director (Environmental

	<p>Services) is a designated chief officer Job Descriptions / Person Specifications Performance Development Reviews Pay and Conditions of Services – as set out for Chief Officers Responsibilities as set out in the Constitution</p>
<p>m) adopt clear protocols and codes of conduct to ensure that the implications for supporting community political leadership for the whole Council are acknowledged and resolved</p>	<p>The Constitution includes the Member and Employee Codes of Conduct and the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations</p>

DIMENSION FOUR – RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

5. Teesdale District Council will establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and processes for managing risk and undertake regular reviews of its Systems of Internal Control. Together, these arrangements will:

- include making public statements to stakeholders on the authority's risk management strategy, framework and processes to demonstrate **accountability**
- include mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing **effectiveness** against standards and targets and the operation of controls in practice
- demonstrate **integrity** by being based on robust systems for identifying, profiling, controlling and monitoring all significant strategic and operational risks
- display **openness** and **inclusivity** by involving all those associated with planning, delivering and receiving services, including partners
- include mechanisms to ensure that the risk management and control process is monitored for continuing compliance to ensure that changes in circumstances are accommodated and that it remains **up-to-date**

The Council will:	Systems / processes / documentation demonstrating compliance
a) develop and maintain robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks which involve the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services	Risk Management Strategy Risk Management Methodology Risk Management Policy Each Directorate is responsible for risk management within its own area Audit Committee has responsibility for Risk Management Risk evaluation is incorporated into Service Plans Summary of risk is contained in all Committee Reports
b) put in place effective risk management systems including systems of internal control and an internal audit function. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and relevant statements of best practice and need to ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and are used economically, efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use	Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer responsibilities Risk Management System Scheme of delegation in Constitution Internal Audit Function – Audit Charter Council has a register of Member Interests Council has a register of Officer Interests Financial Regulations and Contract Regulations Performance Development Reviews Performance Management Framework

	<p>Service Plans incorporate risk assessments</p> <p>Executive Committee Reports</p> <p>Project Management Framework</p> <p>Cost Benefit Analysis</p> <p>Value For Money Assessments</p>
c) ensure that services are delivered by trained and experienced people	<p>Job Descriptions and person specifications</p> <p>Training identified through Performance Development Reviews</p> <p>Human Resources Strategy (incorporating Workforce Planning Strategy)</p> <p>Training and Development Programme</p> <p>Investors in People accreditation</p> <p>Competency Framework</p>
d) put in place effective arrangements for an objective review of risk management and internal control including internal audit	<p>Annual Audit Letter</p> <p>External Audits</p> <p>Performance Management Framework</p> <p>Internal Audit Plan</p> <p>Internal Audit – Audit Charter</p> <p>Head of Internal Audit Annual Report</p> <p>Report of Chair of Audit Committee</p> <p>Assurance Framework</p>
e) maintain an objective and professional relationship with external auditors and statutory inspectors	<p>Annual Audit Letter and other Audit reports</p> <p>Internal Audit – Audit Charter</p>
f) publish on a timely basis within the annual report, and objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the authority's risk management and internal control mechanisms and their effectiveness in practice	<p>Statement of Internal Control</p> <p>Internal Control Assurance</p> <p>Annual Report</p>

DIMENSION FIVE – STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

6. The openness, integrity and accountability of individuals within the authority form the cornerstone of effective corporate governance. The reputation of Teesdale District Council depends on the standards of behaviour of everyone in it, whether members, employees or agents contracted to it. Therefore, members and senior officers of the Council accept the need to:

- exercise **leadership** by conducting themselves as role models for others within the authority to follow
- define the standards of personal behaviour that are expected from Members and staff and all those involved in service delivery, and put in place arrangements to ensure:
 - **accountability**, through establishing systems for investigating breaches and disciplinary problems and taking actions where appropriate, including arrangements for redress
 - **effectiveness** in practice through monitoring their compliance
 - that objectivity and impartiality are maintained in all relationships to demonstrate **integrity**
 - that such standards are documented and clearly understood to display **openness** and **inclusivity** and are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are kept **up-to-date**

The Council will:	Systems / processes / documentation demonstrating compliance
a) develop and adopt formal codes of conduct defining the standards of personal behaviour to which individual members, officers and agents of the authority are required to subscribe and put in place appropriate systems and processes to ensure that they are complied with	Anti-Bullying Policy Dignity at Work Policy Whistle-Blowers Policy Equality and Diversity Policy Member Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct Contract Procedure Rules Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy Complaints Procedure Performance Management Framework Performance Development Reviews
b) 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 they continue to operate in practice	Standing Orders Register of Interests Financial Procedure Rules Contract Procedure Rules Employee Code of Conduct Equality and Diversity Strategy Anti-Fraud statement Member Code of Conduct

<p>c) put in place arrangements to ensure that the procedures and operations of the authority are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and to monitor their continuing compliance in practice</p>	<p>Member Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct Standards Committee work and reports to Committee</p>
<p>d) put in place arrangements for 'Whistle-blowing' to which staff and all those contracting with the Council have access</p>	<p>Whistle-blowing policy Member Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct Conditions of Services (incorporating Disciplinary Procedures) Complaints Procedure Local Government Ombudsman Standards Board for England Audit Commission Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy</p>

EVIDENCING THE DIMENSIONS

- 15 All policies, systems, procedures and structures that determine and control the way in which the Council manages its business for the greater good of the community comprise the local code.
- 16 To ensure that this code is a dynamic process that leads to real outcomes, it has been developed as follows:
- i) the main documents and functions that support corporate governance and in turn shape other processes have been identified
 - ii) for each document / function the target audience has been identified
 - iii) a lead officer for each document / function has also been identified to ensure that the identified duty in respect of corporate governance is clearly assigned to an accountable person, this is further supported by identifying the lead member and the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel
 - iv) for each document / function there is a description of how it works in practice in the council, raising awareness of what actually happens
 - v) parts of the code will continue to evolve and develop as local government modernisation continues and legislation changes, therefore a monitoring, review and action plan has been incorporated. This will ensure that all parts of the code are reviewed in light of effectiveness and emerging good practice.
- 17 Amendments and updates have been added, in such a way as to enable changes from 2006 to be readily identified.

KEY DOCUMENT FUNCTION

JOB DESCRIPTIONS / PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all staff are clearly defined in writing and that services are delivered by trained and experienced people

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Every post is required to have a job description and person specification.</p> <p>These are used by the Job Evaluation Scheme (PILAT) to determine the grade for the post.</p> <p>All changes to job descriptions and person specifications must be signed off by the appropriate Director.</p> <p>Recruitment and Selection awareness training is regularly undertaken for all senior managers.</p> <p>Competency framework underpins the recruitment and selection process and is used by managers in all Performance Development Reviews. This is used to inform the training programme.</p>	<p>Each post is reviewed before filling to ensure it is still fit for purpose.</p> <p>At Performance Development Reviews job description and person specifications are reviewed for appropriateness.</p> <p>Consistency across Directorates is ensured by the <i>Assistant Chief Executive Directorate</i>.</p>	<p>Competencies will be incorporated into all new and revised person specifications</p> <p><i>Training and Development Plan linked to Performance Development Reviews</i></p>

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure that the all the Council's stakeholders are identified and a framework for consultation exists to engage our communities & our stakeholders to ascertain their views and inform our future service delivery

Lead Member: *Deputy Leader*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p><i>Community Engagement Strategy toolkit and work programme approved by Executive Committee, November 2007</i></p> <p>The Parish Forum meets every 4 months and is available for consultation purposes.</p> <p>Statutory surveys are undertaken as appropriate.</p> <p>Need to develop consultation on Race Equality and Disability Act.</p>	<p>The strategy will be reviewed annually in March of each year to ensure it is still relevant and to update the 3 year rolling programme of key stakeholder consultation events (which will be picked up from the Service Plans).</p> <p>Strategy to be available on the Intranet.</p>	<p><i>Deliver Community Engagement Strategy, toolkit and work programme</i></p>

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To have a Corporate Procurement Strategy to enable informed decisions to be taken upon the method of delivering services to meet the needs of the local community

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Directors are responsible for ensuring departments comply with the procurement strategy.</p> <p>Service Reviews to take account of the procurement strategy and the New Ways of Working framework.</p> <p>Policy framework <i>in place</i> with advice and guidance on various aspects of procurement. .</p> <p>Training provided for all officers involved in procurement. Advice for Members is also provided.</p> <p>Procurement Board will keep an up to date record of all major procurement activity to be undertaken during the year.</p> <p>Procurement Board to be responsible for the contracts register.</p>	<p>Regular meetings take place with Wear Valley DC to monitor the implementation of the procurement strategy & progress against the National Procurement Strategy Milestones.</p> <p>Procurement strategy implementation <i>monitored by the Procurement Board</i></p> <p>Procurement Strategy reviewed <i>annually</i> by Executive Committee.</p>	<p><i>Further</i> guidance documentation to be developed.</p> <p><i>Spend analysis to be completed and results used to achieve more efficient procurement</i></p> <p><i>Procurement performance indicators to be monitored monthly</i></p>

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN / ANNUAL BUDGETS / BUDGET MONITORING

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To conform to existing and proposed statutory requirements upon annual budget setting and longer term financial planning

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Medium Term Financial Plan sets out the 3 year budget profile for the Council based on the latest information <i>and is updated monthly</i></p> <p>Budget setting process involves a sequence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop corporate plan priorities - first cut service plans, identifying growth and areas for reduction - Star Chamber reviews at Corporate Management Team - <i>Results shared</i> with Executive and Overview & Scrutiny - Proposals for the budget – consultation with stakeholders (including citizens panel) - Finalise budget proposals <p><i>Regular</i> budget monitoring reports <i>issued to and returned</i> from budget managers.</p> <p><i>Monthly review of returns by DMTs and CMT</i></p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan <i>is</i> updated on a <i>monthly</i> basis and is used to inform any decision with financial implications.</p> <p>Budget monitoring reports to <i>Improvement and Performance Board</i> on a quarterly basis with other performance information.</p>	<p><i>Overview and Scrutiny Finance Panel to review and challenge monitoring position quarterly</i></p>

EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL LETTER AND OTHER EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To put in place proper arrangements for the independent review of the Council's financial and operational reporting processes and to respond objectively and positively to the reports from External Audit

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Initially external audit reports are considered by Corporate Management Team to agree recommendations and action plan <i>where necessary</i>.</p> <p>Reports are then sent to the Audit Committee with recommendations as <i>required</i>.</p> <p>External Audit Annual Plan is agreed with the Audit Commission <i>and Audit & Governance Committee</i> and presented to Executive Committee for approval. This includes the cost of the service.</p> <p>Annual Audit letter is produced at the end of each financial year and summarises the outcomes from work they have carried out within the Council. This report is presented to the Audit Committee and then goes to Full Council. Outcomes help inform the Audit Plan for the following year.</p>	<p>An escalation process exists to enable non-compliance with agreed action plans to be reported to the appropriate Director and where necessary the Audit Committee for further action to be agreed.</p> <p><i>Issues are followed up by external audit in future years.</i></p>	

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To put in place proper effective Internal Audit arrangements

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>A risk assessment is undertaken of the Council's key controls and this informs the annual audit plan for the Council. The Annual Audit Plan is approved by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>An action plan to implement Audit recommendations is agreed with the relevant service manager with appropriate timescales set and a responsible officer identified.</p> <p>Internal audit reports are reported to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Training for the Internal Auditor is identified each year through the Performance Development Review system. This is to ensure the Internal Auditor is kept abreast of new <i>requirements</i> and changing legislation.</p> <p>The Audit Service is compliant with the <i>Internal Audit Code of Practice</i></p>	<p>An escalation process exists to enable non-compliance with agreed action plans to be reported to the appropriate Director and where necessary the Audit Committee for further action to be agreed.</p> <p>Progress report against Annual Audit Plan reported quarterly to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>External Audit report annually on the <i>adequacy</i> of the Internal Audit function.</p>	<p>Need to set up a process of reporting progress against external and internal audit action plans – this should be quarterly to Corporate Management Team.</p>

RISK MANAGEMENT

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To develop and maintain robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks which involve the participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Risk Management Strategy agreed by <i>Executive Committee</i></p> <p><i>Each service maintains a service risk register.</i></p> <p>Service risks are identified in each service plan.</p> <p>Project risks are identified in each project initiation documents.</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register is developed corporately and <i>details</i> the risks associated with the delivery of the <i>corporate plan</i> (i.e. the Council's corporate priorities).</p> <p>Health and Safety risks are identified by each service area. Where there are corporate health and safety issues, joint policies and protocols <i>are</i> developed to minimise these.</p> <p>Emergency Planning risks are <i>managed through the emergency planning coordinators group</i></p>	<p>Service risks are operational and are monitored and managed by the Service Managers.</p> <p>Project risks are specific to the project and are managed by the Project Board.</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register is monitored by Corporate Management Team and reported to the <i>Improvement & Performance Board</i> on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Health and Safety risks are identified by service managers on an annual basis and each time the service changes.</p> <p>Emergency planning risks are managed by the Emergency Co-ordinators meeting and are reported to Government Office North East on an annual basis through the Local Resilience Forum.</p>	<p>A new performance management system is currently being developed and will include corporate risk register and any appropriate service risks.</p> <p>Develop Annual Risk Report – report in September to the Audit Committee <i>and Council</i></p> <p><i>Internal audit to attend DMTs monthly to assist services in reviewing their risk registers and embed risk management approach</i></p>

	<p>Overseeing the whole Risk Management process is the Risk Management Group which is chaired by the <i>Chief Finance Officer</i>.</p> <p>An annual report of Risk Management will be taken by the Audit Committee Chair to Full Council in September of each year.</p>	
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CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To put in place rules and compliance arrangements to ensure that public funds are used in accordance with statutory powers, economically, efficiently and effectively and that Members and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Rules covered at officer and Member induction.</p> <p>Rules awareness sessions for Members and Officers on an annual basis to supplement induction.</p> <p>Directors are responsible for ensuring that their departmental procedures and processes reflect the requirements of the rules and that appropriate controls are in place to prevent non-compliance.</p>	<p>Departmental procedures and process to be subject to review for adequacy by Internal or External Audit – these will be reported to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Rules are reviewed as and when necessary but as a minimum annually as part of the review of the Council's Constitution.</p>	<p><i>Full review carried out, approved by Council February 2007.</i></p> <p><i>Awareness raising with Managers Forum</i></p> <p><i>Updated to reflect management restructure (April 2007)</i></p> <p><i>Review for continued suitability to be carried out during 2008</i></p>

FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES / ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To put in place rules and compliance arrangements to ensure that public funds are used in accordance with statutory powers, economically, efficiently and effectively and that Members and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest.

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Rules covered at officer and Member induction.</p> <p>Rules awareness sessions for Members and Officers on an annual basis to supplement induction.</p> <p>Directors are responsible for ensuring that their departmental procedures and processes reflect the requirements of the rules and that appropriate controls are in place to prevent non-compliance.</p> <p><i>Non compliance reported to Executive Committee</i></p>	<p>Departmental procedures and process to be subject to review for adequacy by Internal or External Audit – these will be reported to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Rules are reviewed as and when necessary but as a minimum annually as part of the review of the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>Anti-fraud and Corruption strategy to be reviewed on an annual basis</p>	

CAPITAL STRATEGY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To conform to existing and proposed statutory requirements upon annual budget setting and longer term financial planning and to ensure that the use of assets is maximised at all times, demonstrating value for money.

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan sets out the 3 year budget profile for the Council based on the latest information.</p> <p>Budget setting processes involves a sequence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop corporate plan priorities - first cut service plans, identifying growth and areas for reduction - Star Chamber reviews at Corporate Management Team - <i>Results shared</i> with Executive and Overview & Scrutiny - Proposals for the budget – consultation with stakeholders (including citizens panel) - Finalise budget proposals 	<p>Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan to be updated on a annual basis and is used to inform any decision with financial implications.</p> <p>Capital programme budget monitoring reports to <i>Improvement & Performance Board</i> on a quarterly basis with other performance information.</p> <p>Quarterly <i>Asset Management Group</i> meetings to deal with any asset management issues.</p> <p>Regular capital management group meetings to ensure that the capital programme is on schedule</p>	<p><i>All properties to be surveyed by April 2008</i></p> <p>Complete review of the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan to be completed by end <i>July 2008</i></p>

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To publish on a timely basis an Annual Statement of Accounts, produced in accordance with relevant standards and codes, which presents the financial position of the Council.

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Statement of Accounts reported to Council for approval <i>in accordance with statutory deadline</i> before being reviewed by External Audit.</p> <p>Detailed <i>review</i> by the Audit Committee prior to the Statement of Accounts being reported to Council.</p> <p>Statutory advertising requirements adhered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publicising that Annual Accounts are available for inspection • informing when the External Audit is completed <p>Training to be provided to all officers involved in process to keep abreast of any new legislation, accounting requirements or best practice guidance.</p> <p>Objections / queries on the Accounts from Council Tax payers dealt with by <i>Internal and External</i> Audit.</p>	<p>Work plan in place to ensure production of Annual Statement of Accounts in line with statutory deadlines.</p> <p>Review of the work plan by Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis from January of each year.</p> <p><i>Review of timetable by Audit & Governance Committee before and after process.</i></p> <p><i>Approval of timetable by Executive Committee.</i></p>	<p>Post Implementation Review of closedown of accounts for current year to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timetable updated to reflect lessons learned during current year • ensure <i>measures</i> put in place to improve process for next year i.e. by improving in-year activity • ensure budget monitoring process is robust

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Lead Officer: *Assistant* Chief Executive

Purpose: To have a long term, SMART strategy for the District in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000

Lead Member: Leader of Council

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Local Strategic Partnership develops a community strategy which reflects the ambition and needs of the community of Teesdale.</p> <p>Implementation is achieved with Themed groups who take forward the implementation of specific elements of the community strategy.</p> <p>Community Strategy informs the Council's combined Corporate and Best Value Performance Plan.</p> <p>The strategy is developed in conjunction with all partners and following full consultation with the public. Each partner takes responsibility for implementing their elements of the action plan.</p>	<p>Action plan to be monitored regularly.</p> <p>The community strategy to be reviewed annually with action plan updated to reflect next years priorities.</p>	<p><i>Community Strategy approved by Council February 2008</i></p> <p><i>SMART action plans to be developed by March 2008</i></p> <p><i>Publish on website</i></p>

COMBINED PLAN – BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN AND CORPORATE PLAN

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: Publication to meet statutory guidance by specified deadlines to present an accurate and balanced statement of current performance and future plans. To include the Council's three year corporate plan and improvement plan.

Lead Member: *Deputy Leader*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Best Value Performance Plan / Corporate Plan priorities and all the Council's improvement projects are set out in a Combined Plan 'Achieving Excellence Together'.</p> <p>'Achieving Excellence Together' is informed by the Community Strategy for the District.</p> <p>Combined plan is available to all the Council's partners.</p>	<p>Implementation of the plan is through the individual Service Plans or corporately through individual projects as defined in the Project Initiation Documents.</p> <p>Monitoring is through the Council's Improvement Board and the Corporate Management Team.</p> <p>Balanced Scorecard demonstrates delivery of 'Achieving Excellence Together'.</p>	

SERVICE PLANS

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure that the authority's contribution to the Community Strategy and the Combined Plan is translated into a series of actions at departmental service level.

Lead Member: *Lead Member for Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Service Plans underpin the priorities of the Council and reflect individual continuous improvement plans for each service.</p> <p>Service targets are developed as a series of National and Local Performance indicators which demonstrates the performance of the service in relation to others and in relation to itself through continuous improvement.</p> <p>Service plans reflect the resources and constraints necessary to delivering the plan.</p> <p>Service plans include a risk assessment for the service and the risk of delivering the plan.</p>	<p>Service Plans are reviewed every 6 months by Overview and Scrutiny Panels to ensure they are on target.</p> <p>Service Plan targets are reflected in Performance Development Reviews which are monitored on a 6 monthly basis.</p> <p>Service Plans are developed on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Service plans need to be improved to reflect corporate priorities around Equality and Diversity and a requirement to demonstrate Value for Money.</p>

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN / HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES / ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure the Council has a strategy for dealing with all staffing matters and has plans for developing the workforce for the future. These should be underpinned by a series of regularly reviewed policies.

Lead Member: *Lead Member for Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Human Resources strategy incorporates the Council's core values and ensures the council complies with best practice in employment, recruitment and retention.</p> <p>A number of Human Resources policies set out how people management is dealt with in the authority.</p> <p>The Human Resources Strategy incorporates the Council's workforce plan and deals with succession planning.</p> <p>Organisational Development is dealt with corporately and ensures that there a clear links between people, performance, culture and managing strategic change.</p>	<p>All Human Resources Policies are reviewed on at least a 3 yearly basis, more frequent updated will be applied where necessary.</p> <p>All Human Resources Policies are implemented in consultation with the unions and Members through the Joint Consultative Committee.</p> <p>The Human Resources Strategy is reviewed annually in line with the Corporate Plan priorities.</p>	<p><i>Revised HR Strategy and Workforce Development Plan approved by Executive Committee, March 2008</i></p>

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To demonstrate continuous improvement in the delivery of the Council's objectives.

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Performance Management Framework is how we manage the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities as set out in 'Achieving Excellence Together'.</p> <p>Performance is managed by the Service Managers at Service Plan level; Corporate Management Team at Improvement and Corporate priority level; Executive Committee at Improvement and Corporate Priority level; and by Overview and Scrutiny on an exception basis.</p> <p>The Council measures its performance against 'Achieving Excellence Together' through the Balanced Scorecard.</p> <p>Performance is measured at an individual level through the Performance Development Reviews.</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators are reported on a monthly basis to Corporate Management Team – by exception.</p> <p>On a quarterly basis performance is reported to Executive Committee.</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny can look at performance at any time.</p>	<p><i>Review performance systems to enable contextual information to be input</i></p>

PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS / COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure that all employees receive an annual Performance Development Review to support Achieving Excellence Together and maintain the Investors in People Accreditation.

Lead Member: Lead Member for Corporate Governance

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Governance

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Everyone has a Performance Development Review every 6 months.</p> <p>The Performance Development Reviews are designed to ensure everyone in the Council understands their role in delivering 'Achieving Excellence Together' it involves setting individual and team targets.</p> <p>The annual Performance Development Review also looks at individual competencies against the competency framework.</p>	<p>Performance Development Reviews take place between Feb / Mar and Sept / Oct each year.</p>	<p><i>Ensure 100% PDR completion by March 2008</i></p>

SERVICE REVIEWS

Lead Officer: Chief Executive

Purpose: To ensure all services are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are still fit for purpose and are delivering services in the most economical and efficient and effective way, demonstrating Value for Money.

Lead Member: Lead Member for *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Each year a number of key service areas will be reviewed in line with the Council's Best Value Performance Review process. It will take account of New Ways of Working to ensure the service can demonstrate that it is delivered in the best way and delivers Value for Money to the Council.</p> <p>As each service is reviewed, if it is not a statutory service, the Council will also decide whether or not it wants to continue to deliver the service.</p> <p>The Review process will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consideration of procurement options • full Equality Impact Assessment • benchmarking of cost • benchmarking of performance • full customer consultation <p>Reviews will be led by Service Improvement Teams which will be agreed before a service review and will be</p>	<p>Every service should be reviewed on a 5 yearly basis</p>	<p><i>All services were subject to review as part of management restructure, approved by Council April 2007.</i></p> <p><i>Best value reviews carried out by Audit Commission of Waste Management (2006) and Regeneration (2007), both judged as 'good' services.</i></p> <p><i>Housing Benefits now managed through shared service arrangement with Wear Valley District Council.</i></p> <p><i>Process of local government reorganisation now underway, further detailed service reviews (outwith LGR process now unlikely).</i></p>

led by a Head of Service not responsible for the service under review.		
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INSPECTION REPORTS

Lead Officer: Chief Executive

Purpose: To ensure that all inspection recommendations are implemented to support the authority's evidence of continuous improvement

Lead Member: *Lead Member for Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>All inspection findings will be reported in the Combined Plan as a requirement of the Best Value Performance Plan.</p> <p>Improvement plans will be incorporated into Service Plans and monitored by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel to ensure improvements are fully implemented.</p> <p>Key messages will be extracted from every inspection and used to inform any corporate improvements which may be required.</p>	<p>Inspection reports will be reported to the Corporate Management Team along with a detailed improvement plan.</p> <p>Inspection reports will also be presented to the Audit Committee.</p>	

CONSTITUTION

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer)*

Purpose:

- To ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of all Committees, all Members and senior officers are clearly defined.
- To develop and maintain a scheme of delegated powers which should include a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for Full Council.
- To put in place clearly documented and understood management processes for policy development, implementation and reviews for decision-making; and formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of the business of the Council.
- To ensure that the role of the Executive Committee Member is formally defined, to include responsibility for providing effective strategic leadership to the authority and for ensuring that the authority successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisation as a whole.
- To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all Members of the authority, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly.
- To ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the authority for ensure that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with.
- To ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given to it on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>The Constitution is distributed to all Members and Senior officers.</p> <p>It is available to all employees.</p> <p>The content of the Constitution is reviewed on a regular basis and amended to reflect any necessary amendments.</p> <p>Any breaches will be reported to the Monitoring Officer who will investigate and report as appropriate to Corporate Management Team, Executive Committee or the Standards Committee.</p>	<p>The Executive and Standards Committees will regularly monitor compliance with the Council's Constitution.</p>	<p><i>Constitution fully updated and issued to all members May 2007</i></p> <p><i>Further update, reissued March 2008</i></p> <p><i>Review of decision making arrangements carried out resulting in establishment of new, stand alone Audit & Governance Committee, complimenting new external and community focussed role for Overview & Scrutiny Committee (August 2007)</i></p> <p><i>Executive lead member roles revised June 2007: increased visibility for LSP responsibilities, lead member reports, regular lead member/lead officer meetings</i></p> <p><i>Full review of Members Allowances Scheme carried out by Independent Remuneration Panel, revised scheme approved by Council December 2007</i></p>

OFFICER / MEMBER PROTOCOLS

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To ensure that Members and officers recognise their respective roles and acknowledge the implications for supporting political leadership for the whole council.

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>This is a protocol which sets out working arrangements and expected standards of behaviour between Members and Officers, making a clear distinction between the roles of Members and the Officers.</p> <p>Any breaches will be reported to the Monitoring Officer who will investigate and report as necessary to Corporate Management Team, Executive and Standards Committees.</p> <p>The protocol is set out in the Council's Constitution.</p>	<p>The protocol is reviewed annually.</p> <p>The Standards Committee will regularly monitor compliance with the Council's Constitution and this protocol.</p>	<p><i>Current protocol, approved by Council June 2006</i></p>

RECORD OF DECISIONS

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of all Committees, all Members and Senior officers are clearly defined

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Records of all decisions (Minutes) are reported to Full Council.</p> <p>All decisions are approved at the next meeting of the relevant body.</p> <p>Agendas for meetings and copies of decisions are available as a public record on the Council's web site.</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee are able to 'call in' any decision of the Executive Committee.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer will review best practice elsewhere and update in accordance with legislative requirements.</p>	<p><i>Maintain procedures in line with legislation and best practice</i></p>

FORWARD PLAN AND SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To ensure that Members meet on a formal basis regularly, to set the strategic direction of the authority and to monitor service delivery.

Lead Member: Lead Member for Governance

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>A schedule of all Council meetings is published at the being of each 'Council Year'. This is published on the Council's web site.</p> <p>A forward plan for the Executive Committee is produced to show all key decisions and includes the Council's performance management and budget monitoring cycle of reports.</p> <p>The forward plan is published on the Council's web site.</p>	<p>Best practice elsewhere will be kept under review.</p>	<p><i>Forward plan reviewed during 2006 and again during 2007/08 (Overview & Scrutiny November, Executive January)</i></p> <p><i>Plan reviewed weekly by CMT, monthly by Executive Committee</i></p> <p><i>Plan on website, updated monthly</i></p> <p><i>Council's forward plan exceeds statutory requirements (fourth option councils not required to maintain forward plan, and plan includes all forthcoming decisions, not just key decisions)</i></p>

STATUTORY OFFICER POSTS

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the 3 statutory officers are understood and defined clearly in writing.

Lead Member: *Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Statutory officer posts are set out in the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>Members are to be aware of the Council's recruitment and selection procedures with regards to these 3 posts as they must make the appointment.</p> <p>Job Descriptions and person specifications will be amended to reflect amendments needed to cater for changed legislation or changes in circumstances.</p>	<p>All job descriptions and person specifications are reviewed on an annual basis in line with the Council's Performance and Development Reviews.</p>	

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Lead Officer: *Director of Customer Services*

Purpose: To put in place appropriate procedures to ensure that members of the public know how to lodge a complaint regarding the council's services and that such complaints are handled fairly

Lead Member: *Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>A corporate complaints procedure sets out how complaints, comments or compliments from the public are handled.</p> <p>Directors will review complaints across their departments.</p>	<p>On an annual basis, the total number of complaints and any lessons learned will be reported to the executive committee.</p> <p>On a quarterly basis the number of complaints and the performance of resolution will be reported via the Balanced Scorecard on a quarterly basis to Members.</p> <p>Procedure to be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account any good practice disseminated from Local Government Ombudsman.</p> <p>Annual Ombudsman report will be reported to Executive Committee.</p>	<p><i>Corporate complaints procedure revised in 2006.</i></p> <p><i>All complaints logged, tracked electronically (including Ombudsman)</i></p> <p><i>Complaints performance included within balanced scorecard</i></p>

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To ensure that all Members are aware of the provisions of the Code, which they must undertake to follow

To put in place arrangements to ensure that Members are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflict of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.

To put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and to monitor their continuing compliance in practice.

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Code of Conduct for Members is part of the Council's ethical framework.</p> <p>Training will be available for all members on an annual basis.</p> <p>Standards committee will receive reports from the Monitoring Officer regarding best practice and ongoing developments.</p>	<p>Annually – standards committee to consider report from the Monitoring Officer</p>	<p><i>Standards Committee re-established with new terms of reference, membership, independent chair, September 2006</i></p> <p><i>Revised members' code of conduct adopted by Council, May 2007</i></p> <p><i>Ethical framework key component of member induction</i></p> <p><i>Preparation for local management of complaints against members ongoing, now likely to be introduced May 2008</i></p>

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To ensure that the responsibilities of all employees in relation to their conduct are clearly defined in writing and are understood

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>Awareness raising sessions via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • induction (for new employees) • annual employee training programme <p>Records of interests, gifts and hospitality are held by the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Code of conduct available to all employees on the Intranet.</p>	<p>Amend as required by statute and in light of experience.</p>	<p><i>National code provided for in Local Government Act 2000, not progressed</i></p> <p><i>Council adopted (minimal) local code, June 2007, based on member code, good practice</i></p> <p><i>National code now 'imminent' (statement by DCLG, February 2008)</i></p>

WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To ensure that all employees and agents are aware of the provisions of the policy

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
Awareness raising sessions via: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• induction (for new employees)• annual employee training programme Policies available to employees on the Intranet.		<i>Policy adopted 2006, updated May 2007, February 2008</i>

COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To put in place proper arrangements and rules to ensure that the Council operates efficiently and effectively and in accordance with recognised standards which comply with statutory requirements and government guidance.

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
Rules covered at Member and Officer inductions.	Annual review by Council with input from Standards Committee. Statutory changes to be incorporated.	<i>Rules covered at member induction, May 2007</i> <i>Support for Chair of Council to ensure well managed, orderly Council meetings</i>

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

Lead Officer: *Assistant Chief Executive*

Purpose: To develop a strategy and policies to ensure that all Council services, policies and procedures comply with the requirements of Equality and Diversity legislation.

Lead Member: *Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>The Council needs to ensure that equality and diversity issues are taken into consideration in everything it does.</p> <p>At the level 1 and 2 of the Equality and Diversity Standard the Council will be expected to demonstrate a commitment to the standard and to ensure that it undertakes regular Equality Impact Assessments of its services.</p> <p>The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out its approach to this issue.</p>	<p>Annual review against the standard.</p> <p>The improvement action plan will be monitored regularly by the Equality and Diversity Group.</p>	<p><i>Equality and Diversity improvement project, target to achieve Equality Standard Level 2 by end March 2008</i></p>

VALUE FOR MONEY FRAMEWORK

Lead Officer: *Chief Finance Officer*

Purpose: To ensure the Council can demonstrate Value for Money in everything it does.

Lead Member: *Resources*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>The Council needs to demonstrate Value for Money by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking service reviews • having a strategic approach to procurement • reviewing partnerships to ensure they meet the Council's key priorities • delivering efficiency targets • Service level management (including performance management and benchmarking of services) • strategic alignment of resources 	<p>Value for Money will be reviewed through the Use of Resources Key Lines of Enquiry.</p> <p><i>Overview & Scrutiny undertaking specific VFM reviews, Finance Panel leading on VFM analysis work</i></p>	<p>Ensure Value for Money is embedded into service planning process – putting a commitment on service managers to demonstrate value for money in everything they do.</p>

MEMBER INDUCTION AND ANNUAL MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Lead Officer: *Chief Governance Officer*

Purpose: To put in place arrangements to ensure that Members are properly trained for their roles and have access to all relevant information to enable them to carry out their role.

Lead Member: *Improvement*

How	Monitoring & Review	Improvement Action Plan
<p>The Council has adopted the Members Charter which has an improvement plan.</p> <p>All Members to attend Induction Programme.</p> <p>All Members to have a copy of the Members Handbook (IDeA best practice guidance).</p> <p>An annual programme sets out Members training and development.</p> <p>Improvement and Development Agency have been providing support for this during the last three years.</p> <p>Members will have Personal Development Plans.</p>	<p>The programme is to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it is effective.</p> <p>Annual Member Development Programme to be developed in line with Member requirements.</p> <p>Each year members will complete a training needs analysis to inform the Member Development Programme.</p> <p>Some training will be a requirement of holding a place on a particular committee (such as planning and licensing) – this will be monitored on an annual basis to ensure committee members have the appropriate skills.</p>	<p><i>Targeted support has been provided in association with IDeA since 2004/05, final phase now underway concentrating on lead member, Overview & Scrutiny support; personal development reviews to be offered to all members.</i></p> <p><i>Individual skills training has been made available via NE Improvement Partnership</i></p> <p><i>Further development needs to be considered in context of local government reorganisation</i></p>