

**SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (2022/23)**

DIRECTORATE: Resources
MEETING: Governance & Audit Committee
DATE: 27th July 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

To receive a **draft** version of the Council's Annual Governance Statement [Appendix 1] prior to inclusion into the Statement of Accounts 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Governance & Audit Committee contribute to the appropriateness and content of the draft Annual Governance Statement (2022/23). Considers the review of effectiveness and the assessment made against each of the governance principles. The Committee endorses the Annual Governance Statement for inclusion within the Draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Corporate Governance is about doing the right thing at the right time for the right people in an open and transparent way. The Councils Code of Corporate Governance [Appendix 2] was presented to the Council's former Audit Committee in June 2020 and approved by Cabinet in September 2021.
- 3.2 The Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government', was approved by Council in July 2011; the Code was revised and updated in May 2014 and more recently in 2020. A copy of the Code is available from the Chief Internal Auditor. This Annual Governance Statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code, the updated 2016 guidance and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, the Local Government Measure and the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 3.3 The Annual Governance Statement demonstrates that Monmouthshire County Council has appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements.
- 3.4 This Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by CIPFA and SOLACE, the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016' and Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Guidance Notes for Welsh Authorities 2016'. It embraces the elements of internal financial control required by the 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom'.

- 3.5 Monmouthshire County Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and to proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.6 The Council is also required to self-assess its governance and performance as outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Any recommendations or actions from this Governance Statement for the Council will be integrated into the Council's Annual Wellbeing and Self-Assessment Report.
- 3.7 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

4 The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 4.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.
- 4.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk or failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 4.3 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.
- 4.4 The Statement itself [Appendix 1] demonstrates that Monmouthshire has appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the challenges of the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. The Council can demonstrate that in the majority of areas it has effective governance arrangements in place which are continually improving, but also recognises that there is always further work to do.

5 The Governance Framework

- 5.1 The Council's Code of Corporate Governance has been developed in line with the following principles:

Overarching requirements for acting in the public interest:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

In addition achieving good governance in the Council requires effective arrangements for:

- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits

- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

6 REASONS

- 6.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 an Annual Governance Statement must be prepared and included within the Council's year-end financial statements. The Council is now required to self-assess its governance and performance as outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

8 CONSULTEES

MCC Corporate Governance Group;
Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer People and Governance
Head of Policy, Performance & Scrutiny
Head of Finance
Head of Workforce Planning & Development
Head of Info Technology & Security
Head of Public Protection
Performance & Data Insight Manager
Corporate Health & Safety Manager
Audit Manager

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

MCC Code of Corporate Governance

10 AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS

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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

2022/23

Date of Report Issue

11th July 2023

Report Status

Draft v6 (G&AC)

Report Author

Jan Furtek, Audit Manager



Executive Summary

This Annual Governance Statement demonstrates that Monmouthshire County Council has appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the challenges of the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. The Council can demonstrate that it has effective governance arrangements in place across the organisation which are continually improving, but also recognise that there is always further work to do.

The Council has managed to maintain the majority of its governance arrangements this year and has sound and effective arrangements in place in the services it delivers. The Code of Corporate Governance was presented to the Council's former Audit Committee in June 2020 and approved by Cabinet in September 2021.

Audit Wales's review of Good Governance (2017) concluded that the Council has a clear strategic approach for significant changes, although better information would help Members when deciding the future shape of the Council. This has been addressed.

The Council is now required to self-assess its governance and performance as outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Any recommendations or actions from this Governance Statement for the Council will be integrated into the Council's Annual Wellbeing and Self-Assessment Report.

Contents

Executive Summary	page 1
Scope of Responsibility	page 2
Purpose of the Governance Framework	page 2
The Governance Framework	page 3
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	page 3
Review of Effectiveness	page 5
Chief Internal Auditor Statement and Annual Opinion	page 5
Governance Framework: Supporting Information	page 7
Progress against the AGS Action Plan 2021/22	page 29
Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2022/23	page 29
Monitoring & Evaluation	page 30
Certification by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive	page 31

- 1 This Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016' and Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Guidance Notes for Welsh Authorities 2016'. It embraces the elements of internal financial control required by the 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom'.
- 2 The Statement itself demonstrates that Monmouthshire has governance arrangements in place to meet the challenges of the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. We have demonstrated that in most areas we have effective governance arrangements in place which are continually improving, but also recognise that there is further work to do. Progress against the 2021/22 Action Plan is shown on page 30.

Scope of Responsibility

- 3 Monmouthshire County Council (the Council) (MCC) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation.
- 4 In discharging these responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 5 The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the 'CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010)'.
- 6 The **Code of Corporate Governance**, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government', was initially approved by Council in July 2011; the Code was revised and updated again in June 2020, approved by Cabinet in September 2021. A copy of the Code is available from the Chief Internal Auditor. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the revised Framework and Guidance (2016) and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. The revised Code sets out what governance arrangements are in place within Monmouthshire CC for each of the Governance Principles. The Council plan to review the Code of Corporate Governance during the 2023/24 financial year as an area for future improvement (action 2).

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 7 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads in the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.
- 8 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, outcomes and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised. Appropriate internal controls also ensure the Council's resources are utilised, and services are delivered efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 9 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for a number of years and continued to be in place for the year ended 31st March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

The Governance Framework

- 10 The Council's Code of Corporate Governance is in line with the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' principles:

Overarching requirements for acting in the public interest:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

In addition, achieving good governance in the Council requires effective arrangements for:

- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 11 Monmouthshire has to demonstrate it is compliant with the Well-being of Future Generations (WFG)(Wales) Act 2015 and this complements the way it functions in line with the above principles of good governance; the core behaviours being:

- behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law; and
- ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

This needs to be applied to the five ways of working outlined in the 2015 Act. These five ways of working have to permeate all segments of delivering outcomes which, in turn, should ensure effective use of resources as the Council maximises its contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Monmouthshire and Wales.

- Long Term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

- 12 The key elements of the Council's governance arrangements are set out in its Corporate Plan 2017-2022, "A Monmouthshire that works for everyone" which was approved by Council in February 2018. A mid-term refresh was presented to Council in March 2020.

- 13 Since the Local Government elections in May 2022, a new administration and new Leader of the Council were elected. The administration has been working without a majority. Over the course of the year this administration, along with officers, developed a Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28. This was approved by Council on 20th April 2023.

- 14 As part of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Public Service Board (PSB) is focused on improving social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, in accordance with the sustainable development principle. Public Service Boards have a planning responsibility to prepare and publish an assessment of local well-being, produce a local well-being plan and report annually on its progress.
- 15 During 2021/22 Monmouthshire PSB merged with other local PSBs to form the Gwent PSB. The PSB presented its annual report 2021/22 in July 2022 to the Public Services Scrutiny Committee.
- 16 Over the course of the 2022/23 financial year, the Gwent PSB 'Draft Gwent Wellbeing Plan' was considered twice by the Public Services Scrutiny Committee. The Committee raised a number of concerns regarding the draft plan and questioned the efficacy of the pre-decision scrutiny of the plan. The Committee agreed to write to the Leader of the Council to highlight their concerns.

Review of Effectiveness

- 17 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Strategic Leadership Team within the Authority which has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 18 The review of effectiveness has been completed using a six point scale which is used within Monmouthshire County Council to assess the performance framework and progress with the Community and Corporate Plan.

Level	Definition	Description
6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding – All performance measures have achieved the target set and all actions have been delivered.
5	Very Good	Major strengths – A significant majority of actions and measures are on track. No more than one or two falling short.
4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – The weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – The evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets.
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – The majority of measures and actions have not been achieved.
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weakness – In most areas performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction and the vast majority of actions have not been delivered

- 19 The governance arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose.

Chief Internal Auditor Statement and Annual Opinion

- 20 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an annual opinion based upon and limited to the work performed on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of Monmouthshire County Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control. This is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management, which should provide a reasonable level of assurance. The opinion does not imply that Internal Audit has reviewed all risks relating to the organisation.

The Internal Audit team has completed its internal audit work for the year based upon the Operational Audit Plan approved by the Governance & Audit Committee in June 2022. The Plan was designed to ensure adequate coverage over the Council's financial and operational systems using a risk based assessment methodology.

The audit work included reviews, on a sample basis, of each of these systems/establishments sufficient to discharge the Authority's responsibilities for Internal Audit under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. The opinion is based upon the work undertaken. Work was planned in order to provide sufficient evidence to give me reasonable assurance of the internal control environments tested.

The 2022/23 Audit opinion is partially reliant on previous work undertaken by the team where Reasonable Assurance opinions were issued; there have been no significant changes to the organisation's systems or key personnel and no major frauds were identified.

Internal Audit opinions on the work undertaken at the Shared Resource Service by Torfaen Internal Audit team were also taken into consideration.

Based on the planned work undertaken during the year, in my view the internal controls in operation give **Reasonable Assurance**; *Adequately controlled, although some risks identified which could compromise the overall control environment. Improvements required.*

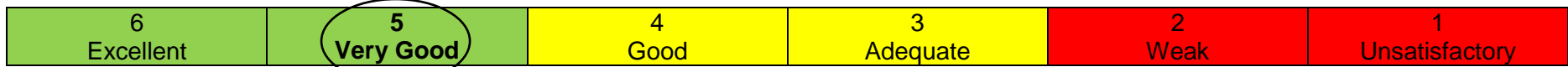
The opinion does not imply that Internal Audit has reviewed all risks relating to the organisation.

Jan Furtek
Audit Manager (Acting Chief Internal Auditor)
June 2023

It is worth noting that the following changes to key Governance positions have occurred within Monmouthshire County Council between the end of the 2022/23 financial year and the date of publication of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

- The Chief Internal Auditor left the Authority in April 2023. The duties of this position are being fulfilled by the Audit Manager who is suitably qualified to undertake this role.
- The Chief Officer People & Governance is due to leave the Council in July 2023. A recruitment process is currently on-going to appoint into this key position which will be redesignated as the Chief Officer for Law & Governance.

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law



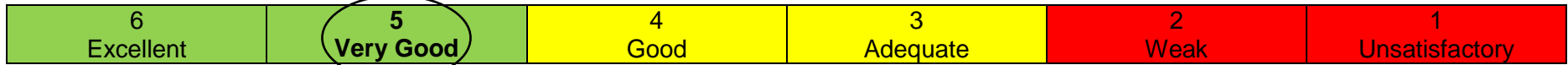
The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also for how we use the resources under our stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes we have achieved. In addition, we have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, we can demonstrate the appropriateness of all our actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement																
Behaving with integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members Code of Conduct in Constitution which reflects Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2016 Officers Code of Conduct in Constitution Registers of interests / hospitality Induction training Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution Member led Authority principles/document Member training programme Council Values — Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, Teamwork, Kindness Whistleblowing Policy Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy Standards Committee Standards Committee Annual Report presented to Council Member Dispute Resolution Complaints procedure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Code of Conduct for Members and the protocol on Member / Officer relationships are set out in the Constitution, was updated in May 2022. The Standards Committee, which includes a majority of independent representatives, advises on and monitors the Members' Code of Conduct, the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations, and any other Codes relating to the conduct of Members. The Standards Committee met 2 times during 2022/23. Public Service Ombudsman Wales Annual Report (2021/22) was presented to Cabinet in October 2022. Conduct Complaints about MCC Members received by the Public Services Ombudsman: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019/20</th> <th>2020/21</th> <th>2021/22</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not upheld</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referred to Standards Committee</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referred to Adjudication Panel</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Not upheld	2	1	2	Referred to Standards Committee	0	0	0	Referred to Adjudication Panel	0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a 'Governance Working Group' to discuss and review the Governance arrangements across Monmouthshire Council to ensure they are fit for purpose. (Action 1) As part of the Governance Working Group, review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. (Action 2)
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22																
Not upheld	2	1	2																
Referred to Standards Committee	0	0	0																
Referred to Adjudication Panel	0	0	0																

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decision 'Call In' process 	<table border="1" data-bbox="943 169 1675 256"> <tr> <td>TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No judicial reviews were commenced or dealt with at the pre-action stage in the previous year. ▪ The Governance & Audit Committee met 9 times during 2022/23 and has the responsibility for ensuring that sufficient checks are in place to identify any potential misconduct within the authority. 	TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED	2	1	2	
TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED	2	1	2				
<p>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Values — Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, Teamwork, Kindness ▪ Contract procedure rules ▪ Financial procedure rules ▪ Codes of conduct for members and employees ▪ Whistleblowing Policy 	<p>The ethical governance framework includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Codes of conduct for officers and Members. ▪ A protocol governing Member/Officer relations. ▪ A whistle-blowing policy widely communicated within the Council. ▪ Registers of personal and business interests for Members. ▪ Declarations of interests for Chief Officers. ▪ An agreed policy and associated corporate procedures for ensuring that complaints about services can be properly made and investigated, and for ensuring that any lessons learnt can be applied. ▪ All exemptions of the Contract Procedure Rules are reported through the Governance & Audit Committee periodically. The Internal Audit team co-ordinates the exemption process in conjunction with strategic procurement. ▪ The Governance & Audit Committee has the opportunity to call in senior managers during the year and challenge them on why a procurement process went outside the Council's normal tendering processes. There were no call-ins during 2022/23. ▪ A Scrutiny and Executive Protocol is in place which is aligned to the updated constitution of May 2022 and provides parameters for effective executive and scrutiny relationships. 					
<p>Respecting the rule of law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member and Officer Code of Conduct in Constitution ▪ Role of Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer established in Constitution ▪ CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Constitution is updated periodically by the Monitoring Officer; the latest update approved by Council was in May 2022. It can be found on the Council's intranet and website. ▪ To ensure agreed procedures and all applicable statutes are complied with, the Monitoring Officer attends full Council meetings, Cabinet and SLT. To ensure sound financial management is a key factor in decisions, the Deputy Chief 					

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy ▪ Governance & Audit Committee ▪ Internal Audit Section ▪ Internal Audit Annual Report presented to Governance & Audit Committee ▪ External Auditors Annual Audit Letter ▪ Standards Committee ▪ Whistleblowing Policy ▪ Complaints procedure ▪ Decision 'Call In' process 	<p>Executive and Chief Officer Resources (S151 Officer) attends SLT, Cabinet and Council meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989, the Monitoring Officer ensures compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. After appropriate consultation, this officer will report to the full Council in respect of any proposals, decisions or omissions which could be unlawful or which have been subject of an Ombudsman Investigation resulting in a finding of maladministration. The Monitoring Officer has not issued a Section 5 report in 2022/23, or in the previous year, 2021/22. ▪ An Anti-Bribery compliance update and annual risk assessment was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee by the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) in October 2022. 	

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement



Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agendas published in advance of meetings ▪ Minutes published following meetings ▪ Democratic meetings live streaming on YouTube ▪ Decision making process described in Constitution ▪ Forward Plan published on internet showing key decisions to be made by Council and Cabinet ▪ Annual budget consultation ▪ Freedom of Information Scheme ▪ Public questions at Council, Cabinet and Select Committees ▪ Engagement with hard to reach groups, including those with the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. As well as engagement with children and young people to meet the requirement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agendas are published in advance of all meetings on the Council’s website; corresponding minutes are published post meeting. ▪ Transparency and openness are important to Monmouthshire; the Annual Statement of Accounts was taken through the Governance & Audit Committee process before being endorsed by Cabinet and Council. All Council decisions, reports and questions asked by Members are available on the website. Financial information, Corporate Plan progress, Council activities, achievements, developments, updates and events were included on the Council’s intranet and website. All public meetings of the Council are live streamed and are available to view on the Council’s YouTube channel at any time after the meeting, which provides greater transparency of the Council’s business. ▪ A Forward Plan showing key decisions to be made by Council, Cabinet and Committees is published. ▪ The Council’s website contains links to the following areas of open data in the interests of openness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ List of expenditure over £500 ○ Our spend data as a useful dashboard ○ Food Hygiene ratings ○ List of Primary Schools ○ List of Secondary Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the minute taking process and assess any opportunities to further digitise. (Action 3) ▪ Increase the number of datasets published on the council’s website. (Action 4)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publication of open data sets on the Council’s website 	<p>Following a decision of the First Tier Information Rights Tribunal (EA/2018/0033) the Authority no longer publishes business rates data on its open data web page. It will no longer disclose information about business rate accounts in response to FOI requests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy and decision-making is facilitated through (i) Council and Cabinet; the meetings of which are open to the public and live streamed online except where exempt or confidential matters are being discussed, and (ii) a scheme of delegation to committees and officers as set out in the Constitution: Four Scrutiny Committees (including the statutory Public Services Scrutiny Committee) and a separate Governance & Audit Committee review, scrutinise and hold to account the performance of the Cabinet, decision-making committees and officers. A Scrutiny “Call-In” process for decisions which have been made but not yet implemented is incorporated in the Constitution in order to consider their appropriateness. ▪ Implementing Open Government standards which enable us to effectively engage with our citizens and open up our data for anyone who needs to use it. Making the most of digitisation and digital inclusion to enable us to engage with people across our County. ▪ Corporate risks are published. 	
<p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gwent Public Service Board Partnership arrangements and structure ▪ Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-Being Plan ▪ Gwent Public Service Board Well-Being Plan ▪ Public Services Select Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In May 2018, Monmouthshire Public Services Board (PSB), adopted their Well-being Plan in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The plan was informed by the Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment which sought the views of Monmouthshire residents and draws together findings from data, academic research and policy papers and the views of local people. This Plan was challenged publicly through Public Services Select Committee, July 2021. During 2021/22 several local PSBs merged to form the Gwent Public Services Board. A Gwent wide well-being assessment has been produced, including an assessment of well-being in Monmouthshire and local communities within the county, March 2022. 	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over the course of the 2022/23 financial year, the Gwent PSB 'Draft Gwent Wellbeing Plan' was considered twice by the Public Services Scrutiny Committee. The Committee raised a number of concerns regarding the draft plan and questioned the efficacy of the pre-decision scrutiny of the plan. The Committee agreed to write to the Leader of the Council to highlight their concerns. 	
<p>Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ward role of Councillors ▪ Consultations on the council website and social media platforms ▪ Complaints Policy and Annual Report ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) ▪ Complaints procedure ▪ Integrated Impact Assessment including Future Generations evaluation and Equality Impact Assessment, on decision reports ▪ Strategic Equality Plan ▪ Communication via Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social media e.g. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, are used to engage local people and communicate the corporate message. Scrutiny Committees hold a Public Open Forum on each agenda and the public can attend meetings remotely or in person. They can also submit written, audio or video representations to Scrutiny Committees and submit suggested topics for the scrutiny forward work programme via the Scrutiny Website www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/scrutiny. Chief Officers, Members and the Communications team are very proactive in engaging with the public. ▪ Public engagement events and YouTube continued to be used in 2022/23 for the budget proposals. The Council has encouraged the community within Monmouthshire to actively contribute to making stepped changes to improve the way in which services are provided. This links back to the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act which sets out five ways of working including involvement. ▪ The Medium Term Financial Plan supports the vision for Monmouthshire and extensive public engagement continued in 2022/23 for the 2023/24 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan which engaged with the public in their own community; this included website, social media, drop in sessions, Cabinet Member YouTube video and open meetings. 	

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

6 Excellent	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
Defining Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government & Elections Act 2021 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Monthly Financial Monitoring meetings held for each service area ▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Capital Review Programme ▪ Self-Assessment report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In March 2018 Council approved the Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2022, which incorporated the Council's well-being objectives, and endorsed the Area Plan. The well-being objectives bring together the latest evidence from the well-being assessment, policy and legislation and show how the Council strives to deliver a public service that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Well-being Objectives are incorporated within the Corporate Plan. ▪ Over the course of the 2022/23 year, following the local government elections in May 2022, Officers have worked with the new administration to develop a Community & Corporate Plan for 2022-2028. Draft plans were submitted to and considered by Full Council in October 2022, and January 2023 prior to it being approved in April 2023. ▪ The Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028, "Taking Monmouthshire Forward" sets a purpose 'To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life'. This is underpinned by the Councils 6 objectives (fair place, green place, thriving & ambitious place, safe place, connected place and learning place) and 5 values (teamwork, openness, fairness, flexibility and kindness). ▪ Monmouthshire County Council is a member of the Gwent PSB (July 2021), where we work with other public services and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the revenue and capital budget process and the Councils financial strategy. (Action 5)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<p>voluntary sector on the delivery of the local well-being plan. This includes countywide well-being objectives that are a focus for public services. Combining the ingenuity and initiative of all partners is key to finding new solutions to pressing, social, economic and environmental problems. This sense of ‘power of the collective’ is central to its core purpose, reflected in its values and embodied in its culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular budget monitoring reports for revenue and capital were presented to and approved by Cabinet during the year, in October 2022, December 2022, March 2023, and at Outturn. The budget management actions of Cabinet and senior officers are scrutinized regularly by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee following the same timetable. The budget monitoring reporting cycle periodically contains some output measures and unit cost data that are built into services detailed forecasting, so that economic comparison of costs with other Councils can be made. The Council has a Welsh Language Strategy for 2017 – 2022, which sets out a vision of how Welsh language will look in Monmouthshire in 5 years. The Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2021/22 was presented to the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee in July 2022. ▪ Objectives are supported by Service Business Plans to operationally deliver these objectives. Service plans are made available on the Council’s Hub intranet site. These are quality assessed as part of the service planning process. All service plans were developed to align the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Plan. 	
<p>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering 3 financial years approved annually by Council ▪ Corporate Plan ▪ Risk management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MTFP process for 2022/23 to 2025/26 was reviewed and approved by Cabinet in December 2021. The Draft Capital Budget Proposals 2022/23 to 2025/26 were taken to Cabinet in January 2022. Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2023/24 also went to Cabinet in January 2023. Final Proposals went to Cabinet before being approved by Council in March 2023. Ongoing scrutiny of the Council’s budget position in line with the MTFP has provided Members with a greater understanding of the budget setting process and the pressures within individual directorates. 	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future Generations Evaluation, including Equality Impact Assessment, on decision making reports ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In May 2019 Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency. Plans are underway to meet our target to reduce council carbon emissions to zero by 2030. In November 2021, following wide community consultation, an updated and amended action plan was published. 	

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

6 Excellent	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource input while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
Determining interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan ▪ Scrutiny / Select Committee function ▪ Risk management policy and guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Finance and Legal implications in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports report writing template and guidance ▪ Future Generations Evaluation (including Equality Impact Assessment) ▪ Results of consultation exercises ▪ Reports to Government Agencies ▪ Enabling strategy framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monmouthshire is a partner in the South East Wales Consortium Schools Causing Concern protocol. This Policy forms a part of, and is aligned with, the National Model for School Improvement in relation to the informal support and challenge provided by the Local Authority to a school prior to any issuing of a warning notice or invocation of formal powers of intervention based on the six grounds for intervention. It also aligns with the Welsh Government Guidance on Schools Causing Concern (March 2016). ▪ Regular reporting into Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee enables the achievement of the Council's objectives to be challenged and appropriate actions put in place to address any identified issues so that the intended outcomes can be achieved. The Strategic Risk Register was reviewed by Governance & Audit Committee in September 2022 and Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee in December 2022. ▪ Dealing with customer complaints helps Monmouthshire to identify and deal with failures in service delivery. The Council's complaint / compliment procedure is available on the web site. Out of 163 complaints received in 2021/22, 151 were resolved informally with 12 being formally investigated, 2 of which were referred the Ombudsman, with none formally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that a suite of enabling strategies and a framework is in place to identify and support any interventions needed. (Action 6)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<p>investigated. 455 comments were received along with 246 compliments (Governance & Audit Committee March 2023).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A separate report containing the Ombudsman’s findings in relation to complaints about Monmouthshire County Council was reported separately to both Cabinet and Governance & Audit Committee. It showed that Monmouthshire has one of the lowest levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.21 per 1,000 residents. ▪ Consultation on budget proposals is extensive. ▪ The Authority makes numerous annual returns to various external Governing Bodies, such as the Food Standards Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, Department for Levelling Up & Communities, Department for Transport, Home Office, Gambling Commission, DEFRA, Health & Safety Executive, General Registrar’s Office, National Fraud Initiative and other government departments’. These allow the Council to self-assess and determine if any intervention is required within the services provided. 	
<p>Planning Interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly Financial Monitoring meetings for each Directorate reviews progress and authorises corrective action where necessary ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan ▪ Annual budget setting process in place including consultation exercise ▪ Financial procedure rules ▪ Senior Management Structure ▪ Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government and Elections Act 2021 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Annual Self-Assessment Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council has established robust planning and control cycles covering strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets which is achieved through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A timetable for producing and reviewing plans on an annual basis. ○ Working with a consultation and engagement strategy. ○ Quarterly and annual performance monitoring including achievement of national and local performance indicators. ▪ There is robust Medium Term Financial Planning. ▪ There is an annual budget setting process in place including an extensive consultation exercise. ▪ Self-assessment report presented to Governance & Audit Committee and Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee to review, scrutinise and make any recommendations for changes. ▪ Self-assessment report agreed by Council and published in September 2022. The report provides an assessment of the extent the council met its wellbeing goals, which were set out in the Corporate Plan 2017- 22, the evidence to show this and identified areas of improvement. It also provided an evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Service Business Plans to ensure they align to the new Community & Corporate Plan. (Action 7)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Reports to Government Agencies 	<p>of the key activity delivered as part of the interim Coronavirus strategies and the ‘enabling functions’ that support council services to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability including financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, digital and data.</p>	
<p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet and scrutiny ▪ Mid-Year Budget Statement to Cabinet ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan ▪ Budget consultation ▪ Community & Corporate Plan ▪ Annual Self-Assessment Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council ensures the Medium Term Financial Strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints by setting out any shortfall in resources and spending requirements in the context of service priorities. ▪ To ensure that the budget process is all inclusive there is regular engagement with members with robust scrutiny by the Service Improvement & Finance Scrutiny ▪ The achievement of the Community & Corporate Plan is reviewed at least annually. 	

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

6 Excellent	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<p>Developing the entity's capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance review for all staff where required by them or their line manager ▪ People Strategy ▪ Quarterly financial reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees ▪ Partnership & collaborative working arrangements ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Community & Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council's recruitment procedures provide equality of employment opportunities. The equality-assessed pay structure meets the requirements of the Single Status Agreement of 1997. The Single Status Collective Agreement was approved by Cabinet in September 2010. This is complemented by the People Strategy. The Pay Policy is approved annually by Council and is available on the MCC website. ▪ Developing the digital capabilities of people and systems to enable effectiveness, efficiency and enhanced customer services is important within Monmouthshire and is measured via the Digital Programme Service Business Plan. To further enhance service delivery and better deal with cyber security / information risks the Digital Programme Office has been split into the Information Security and Technology Team and the Digital Design and Innovation Team. ▪ There is continued support for Members' development through briefing sessions and other learning opportunities. A comprehensive training programme was developed for the intake of new Members following Council elections in May 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A learning management system to be implemented across the organisation to coordinate all training including for schools. (Action 8) ▪ A full analysis to define and identify any training need(s). A focus will be to prioritise ensuring people are suitably qualified and experienced to fulfil roles, capable of leadership, future professional development, and staff are digitally enabled. (Action 9)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Scrutiny Member Development Training Programme is in place which provides ongoing specific skills based training for Members and includes scrutiny induction; this is agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs' Group. The training programme forms part of the Scrutiny Service Plan. ▪ Appropriate and relevant job descriptions were in place for the Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), Monitoring Officer and Head of Finance. ▪ The Council ensures that it has appropriate governance arrangements around its collaborations with other public agencies and other third parties. These can take a range of forms, from informal arrangements to those where governance arrangements are determined through legislation. The governance arrangements form a key part of the decision making processes that the Cabinet or Council follow when deciding to enter a collaborative arrangement, transparent local accountability is a key area of focus. 	
<p>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution ▪ Scheme of Delegation published in Constitution ▪ Scrutiny member development programme ▪ Occupational Health and Wellbeing Policy exists with aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees to enable them to achieve their full potential at work ▪ Internal and external audit reports and action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monmouthshire Council takes an active part in the INFUSE programme which is designed to build skills and capacity for future public services across the Cardiff Capital Region. 9 associates from MCC took part in cohort 3 which commenced in January 2023. ▪ There has been member led training with both senior officers and cabinet members. ▪ There are regular 1-2-1 meetings with the Leader, Cabinet members, Chief Executive, SLT and Heads of Service. ▪ The Constitution sets out the Scheme of Delegation which is regularly reviewed. ▪ Annual appraisal and performance review 	

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

6 Excellent	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will ensure financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<p>Managing Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area, including service risk registers ▪ Strategic Risk Register reported to Governance & Audit Committee, Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council’s Strategic Risk Management Policy was updated and approved by Cabinet in March 2019; progress was reported into Governance & Audit Committee in September 2022. The policy requires the proactive participation of all those responsible for planning and delivering services in identifying, evaluating and managing high level strategic risks to the Council’s priorities, services and major projects. The risk controls necessary to manage them are identified and monitored to ensure risk mitigation. ▪ Within the Council the purpose of risk management is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ preserve and protect the Council’s assets, reputation and staff. ○ aid good management of risk and support whole authority governance. ○ aid delivery of its population outcomes internally and when working with partners. ○ improve business performance and anticipated risks in delivering improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and update the Councils Strategic Risk Management Policy. Improve how reports are presented to Cabinet and the Governance & Audit Committee to provide the necessary assurance. (Action 10) ▪ Review the governance arrangements for Corporate Health and Safety to ensure the Council is provided with an assurance that key health and safety risks are being effectively managed

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ avoid unnecessary liabilities, costs and failures. ○ shape procedures and responsibilities for implementation. ▪ The strategic risk assessment ensures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic risks are identified and monitored by Monmouthshire. ○ Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate. ○ Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the Council. ▪ The risk assessment is prepared by drawing on a wide range of evidence including service plans, performance measures, regulatory reports, progress on the previous risk assessment and the views of Select and Governance & Audit Committees. In order to mitigate the risks, proposed actions are recorded and also aligned back into the respective Service Business Plan. The risk assessment is a living document and is updated over the course of the year as new information comes to light. ▪ The Council’s Strategic Risk Assessment for 2022/23 contained 14 risks. These were reviewed throughout the year with the latest version was presented to Governance & Audit Committee in March 2023. Following mitigation there were 8 medium risks and 8 high risks. 	<p>across the organisation. (Action 11)</p>
<p>Managing performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community & Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Director of Social Services Annual report ▪ Chief Officer Children & Young People Annual Report ▪ Scrutiny function ▪ Bi-monthly Directorate and Financial monitoring meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit Wales presented the Councils ISA2060 report for 2021/22 to the Governance & Audit Committee in February 2023. ▪ The Councils Self-Assessment report 2021/22 was completed in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to ensure that members and the public had a clear and transparent assessment of the Council’s performance in 2021/22. ▪ The Authority makes numerous annual returns to various external Governing Bodies and Government Agencies, such as the Food Standards Agency, Drinking Water Inspectorate, Department for Levelling Up & Communities, Department for Transport, Home Office, Gambling Commission, DEFRA, Health & Safety Executive, General Registrar’s Office, National Fraud Initiative and other government departments’. 	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<p>Robust internal control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governance & Audit Committee provides assurance on effectiveness on internal control, risk management and governance ▪ Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report to Council ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy ▪ Role of Internal Audit Section ▪ Annual Plans approved by Governance & Audit Committee ▪ Annual Reports to Governance & Audit Committee ▪ Annual Governance Statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Governance & Audit Committee considers the effectiveness of the Council’s arrangements for securing continuous improvement including risk management arrangements. The Governance & Audit Committee also considers corporate governance, monitors the work of auditors and inspectors, and monitors the relationships between auditors and staff and the responses to audit and inspection recommendations. It also has responsibility for reviewing the Annual Statement of Accounts and its associated reports (which include this statement) before approval by Council. The Governance & Audit Committee has an independent, non-political, Chairperson who prepares an annual report of the work of the Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ Internal Audit operate to the standards set out in the ‘Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards’ which have been developed from the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Internal Auditing Standards which came into effect in April 2013. The team’s role and status is set out in the Council’s Internal Audit Charter (revised and updated approved by Governance & Audit Committee September 2021). The Chief Internal Auditor reports a summary of audit findings to the Governance & Audit Committee each quarter; he also reports annually an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s internal control environment through his Internal Audit Annual Report. ▪ The Chief Internal Auditor continues to ensure Internal Audit complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. A self-assessment was undertaken during 2017/18 to assess compliance with the Standards which was validated as compliant in March 2018 by an external assessor. A new external quality assessment is now overdue. ▪ The Council has an objective and professional relationship with its external auditors and statutory inspectors. It manages its information resource through strategies and policies to enable effective decision making which is managed via the Information Strategy and action plan. ▪ The Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy was revised and updated during 2017/18. It was approved by Cabinet July 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update the Council’s Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy and raise awareness across the Council. (Action 12 - c/f) ▪ Complete an External Quality Assessment of the Council’s Internal Audit Service as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. (Action 13)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement																								
		<p>2017 and provides a deterrent, promotes detection, identifies a clear pathway for investigation and encourages prevention. An annual risk assessment on fraud and corruption is presented to Governance & Audit Committee (October 2022). The Council's Council Tax Reduction Anti-Fraud Policy was approved by Cabinet in June 2015. A training package has been developed and was previously presented to Governance & Audit Committee (January 2020). This needs to be further rolled out across the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall opinion on the adequacy of the internal control environment for 2022/23 was REASONABLE. Management agreed to implement the recommendations made in audit reports in order to address the weaknesses identified. The Internal Audit opinions issued in 2022/23 were; <table border="1" data-bbox="909 679 1671 948"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="909 679 1263 746">Opinion</th> <th data-bbox="1263 679 1397 746">2020-21</th> <th data-bbox="1397 679 1532 746">2021-22</th> <th data-bbox="1532 679 1671 746">2022-23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="909 746 1263 788">Substantial Assurance</td> <td data-bbox="1263 746 1397 788">2</td> <td data-bbox="1397 746 1532 788">5</td> <td data-bbox="1532 746 1671 788">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="909 788 1263 829">Considerable Assurance</td> <td data-bbox="1263 788 1397 829">6</td> <td data-bbox="1397 788 1532 829">6</td> <td data-bbox="1532 788 1671 829">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="909 829 1263 871">Reasonable Assurance</td> <td data-bbox="1263 829 1397 871">1</td> <td data-bbox="1397 829 1532 871">7</td> <td data-bbox="1532 829 1671 871">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="909 871 1263 912">Limited Assurance</td> <td data-bbox="1263 871 1397 912">0</td> <td data-bbox="1397 871 1532 912">2</td> <td data-bbox="1532 871 1671 912">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="909 912 1263 948">Total</td> <td data-bbox="1263 912 1397 948">9</td> <td data-bbox="1397 912 1532 948">20</td> <td data-bbox="1532 912 1671 948">22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons why the outcome of an audit review which was deemed to provide Limited Assurance will be presented in a report to the Governance & Audit Committee; assurances have been sought from respective operational managers that action will be taken to make the necessary improvements in control. The Internal Audit team did not have a full complement of staff for the whole year. The Chief Internal Auditor's overall audit opinion is based on the number of audits undertaken and their individual opinions; he was able to give an overall opinion on the adequacy of the control environment but this was based on a limited number of opinions issued. The 2022/23 audit opinion was supported by the knowledge that there were appropriate governance, risk management and internal control assurances in place in previous years, with no significant changes. 	Opinion	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Substantial Assurance	2	5	7	Considerable Assurance	6	6	10	Reasonable Assurance	1	7	4	Limited Assurance	0	2	1	Total	9	20	22	
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Limited Assurance	0	2	1																								
Total	9	20	22																								

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<p>Managing data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have established an Information Security & Technology Team across the organisation, including education ▪ A cyber security team is in place to support, advise and train our workforce. The same team provides a cyber audit function of our ICT infrastructure and governance arrangements ▪ The Information Governance Group with participants from each directorate ▪ A Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) in place ▪ Mandatory training in GDPR and Cyber Security, alongside comprehensive guidance and policies for all aspects of data management ▪ Information Asset Register ▪ Information sharing & publication guidance in place ▪ A comprehensive EDRMS is in place ▪ Annual National and Local performance Indicator data collection process and internal audit arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our comprehensive governance and security arrangements for data and information have enabled us to gain accreditation in industry standards for cyber security. ▪ Cyber security arrangements cover cultural, physical and electronic barriers to data access and misuse. ▪ Information governance is maintained through policies, guidelines, and training that are reported and disseminated via the Information Governance Group, headed up by the SIRO and with departmental representatives. Performance is reported to the Governance & Audit Committee, and this year our performance targets have been exceeded. ▪ Privacy notices are published online and have been updated through the year. ▪ Schedules are maintained of all MCC information 'line of business' systems to ensure they are fit for purpose and upgraded/replaced as needed. ▪ A central EDRMS system is being rolled out to electronically manage, share and retain all data and information outside of line of business systems. ▪ Networks and forums are in place to work with the South East Wales Information Forum (SWIF) and WARP (Warning Advice and Security Point) and the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre). ▪ Data arrangements are audited by Audit Wales and performance reported through the Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ The ICT service, the SRS, are audited by the host organisation Torfaen County Borough Council, and all audits are reported through the SRS governance structures. 	
<p>Strong public financial management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial procedure rules in Constitution ▪ Contract procedure rules in Constitution ▪ Accounting Instructions on Intranet ▪ Spending Restrictions document on Intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council ensures both long term achievement of outcomes and short term performance through the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan. ▪ In July 2018, the Council's Procurement Strategy was approved by Cabinet. The Strategy builds upon workshop sessions undertaken with the Economy and Development Select Committee and the aims, aspirations and priorities for procurement, identified throughout the participative process. In July 2021 Cabinet approved the collaboration with Cardiff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. (Action 14 – c/f)

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
		<p>Council, for mutual benefit, the discharge and provision of the Council's Strategic Procurement services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Councils Contract Procedure Rules were updated in March 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To produce a new Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy. (Action 15)

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

6 Excellent	5 Very Good	4 Good	3 Adequate	2 Weak	1 Unsatisfactory
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Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
Implementing good practice in transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report writing template and guidance ▪ Integrated Impact Assessment including Future Generations evaluation and Equality Impact Assessment, on decision reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Council aims to present understandable and transparent reports for both stakeholders and the public which is supported by:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Report Authors Protocol which ensures consistency in reports. ▪ A Clear Writing guide for Officers. ▪ All reports are signed off by Chief Officers, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer prior to publication. ▪ Where possible exempt reports are split so that the main report can be heard in public with confidential information being a separate exempt report. ▪ Publication of delegated decisions. ▪ Reports are published on the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alignment of Council, Cabinet, ICMD and Scrutiny forward work planners. (Action 16)
Implementing good practices in reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Statement of Accounts audited by an external auditor and approved by Council ▪ Code of Corporate Governance based on CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 2016 ▪ Annual Governance Statement ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Self-Assessment Report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transparency and openness is important to Monmouthshire; the Annual Statement of Accounts was taken through the Governance & Audit Committee before being endorsed by Council. All public meetings of the Council, including Council, Cabinet, Select, Governance & Audit Committee, Planning Committee are live streamed on YouTube and are available to view on the Council's YouTube channel at any time after the meeting, which provides greater transparency of the Council's business. 	

Sub-Principles	What is in place to support this?	Effectiveness	Areas for Future Improvement
<p>Assurance and effective accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Audit provided by Audit Wales ▪ ESTYN reviews & reports ▪ Care Inspectorate Wales reviews & reports ▪ Performance of Internal Audit Section monitored by Governance & Audit Committee ▪ Implementation of Audit Wales and Internal Audit recommendations monitored by Governance & Audit Committee ▪ Peer Review, Corporate Assessment and Corporate Governance Review action plan monitored by SLT ▪ Annual Governance Statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The South East Wales Education Achievement Service (EAS) Business Plan 2022-25 was presented to Cabinet in March 2022. The plan sets out the priorities, programmes and outcomes to be achieved by the EAS on behalf of the South East Wales Consortium. ▪ The Council's enabling strategies have been revised to align to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, these include the Digital Strategy, People Strategy and Asset Management Strategy as well as linking in with Service Business Plans. ▪ The Governance & Audit Committee continues to support the Internal Audit team and endorses its annual report and plan. The plan details the work and service areas the team will cover based on a risk assessment in order to provide assurance on the adequacy of the internal controls, governance arrangements and risk management process. The Governance & Audit Committee presents its Annual report to Council. ▪ The Whole Authority Report: Complaints, Comments and Compliments 2021/22 was presented to Governance & Audit Committee in March 2023 which identified the number and types of feedback, received and dealt with, from 1 April 2021 until 31 March 2022. ▪ Reports and plans to implement Audit Wales and Internal Audit recommendations are reported (as relevant) to Scrutiny and the Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ All agreed recommendation and actions from Internal Audit reviews are monitored. ▪ The Council takes note of all reports issued by External Regulators such as Audit Wales, ESTYN and Care Inspectorate Wales. Action plans are agreed and followed up. 	

Progress against the Action Plan 2021/22

Area for Improvement	Progress
Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules	Carried forward into 2023/24 (Action 5)
Raise awareness across the Council on Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption	Carried forward into 2023/24 (Action 3)
Self-assess the Council's objectives and arrangements as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Complete - The Council's Self-Assessment report 2021/22 was completed in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to ensure that members and the public had a clear and transparent assessment of the Council's performance in 2021/22

Annual Governance Statement Action Plan 2022/23

No	Area for Improvement	By Who	By When
1	Establish a 'Governance Working Group' to discuss and review the Governance arrangements across Monmouthshire Council to ensure they are fit for purpose. (Principle A)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance	June 2023 & on-going
2	As part of the Governance Working Group, review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance. (Principle A)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance (Governance Working Group)	March 2024
3	Review the minute taking process and assess any opportunities to further digitise. (Principle B)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance (Governance Working Group)	December 2023
4	Increase the number of datasets published on the council's website. (Principle B)	Head Of Policy, Performance & Scrutiny	March 2024
5	Review the revenue and capital budget process and the Council's financial strategy. (Principle C)	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer - Resources	October 2023
6	Ensure that a suite of enabling strategies and a framework is in place to identify and support any interventions needed. (Principle D)	SLT	September 2023
7	Review Service Business Plans to ensure they align to the new Community & Corporate Plan. (Principle D)	Head Of Policy, Performance & Scrutiny	December 2023
8	A learning management system to be implemented across the organisation to coordinate all training including for schools. (Principle E)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance (Governance Working Group)	March 2024

Appendix 1

No	Area for Improvement	By Who	By When
9	A full analysis to define and identify any training need(s). A focus will be to prioritise ensuring people are suitably qualified and experienced to fulfil roles, capable of leadership, future professional development, and staff are digitally enabled. (Principle E)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance (Governance Working Group)	March 2024
10	Review and update the Councils Strategic Risk Management Policy. Improve how reports are presented to Cabinet and the Governance & Audit Committee to provide the necessary assurance. (Principle F)	Head Of Policy, Performance & Scrutiny	March 2024
11	Review the governance arrangements for Corporate Health and Safety to ensure the Council is provided with an assurance that key health and safety risks are being effectively managed across the organisation. (Principle F)	Corporate Health & Safety Manager	March 2024
12 (c/f)	Update the Council's Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy and raise awareness across the Council. (Principle F)	Chief Internal Auditor	December 2023
13	Complete an External Quality Assessment of the Council's Internal Audit Service as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. (Principle F)	Chief Internal Auditor	March 2024
14 (c/f)	Deliver awareness raising training sessions on the importance of compliance with revised Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules. (Principle F)	Chief Internal Auditor	December 2023
15	To produce a new Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy. (Principle F)	Chief Officer – Communities & Place Head of Commissioning & Procurement	June 2023
16	Alignment of Council, Cabinet, ICMD and Scrutiny forward work planners. (Principle G)	Chief Officer – Law & Governance (Governance Working Group)	December 2023

Monitoring & Evaluation

We propose over the coming year to continually review our governance arrangements to ensure they remain effective and appropriate. Steps will be taken, where appropriate, to further enhance our governance arrangements.

Certification by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Signed:

Date:

Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader of Monmouthshire County Council

Signed:

Date:

Paul Matthews, Chief Executive



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

**The Code of Corporate Governance
Monmouthshire County Council
2020**

The purpose of this Code is to state the importance to the Council of good corporate governance and to set out the Council's commitment to the principles involved.

The Code is based on guidance to all UK local authorities; CIPFA / SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016'

The Code is included in the Council's constitution and therefore applies to all members and employees of the Council and also to any individuals or bodies authorised to act on its behalf.

The Code will be reviewed in its entirety by no later than 31 March 2024, but minor reviews and updates will be made annually as required.

Reviewed and updated April 2020

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: The Purpose of the Governance Framework.....	4
SECTION 2: The Governance Framework	5
SECTION 3: Background	7
Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	7
Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	9
Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits	11
Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes	12
Principle E: Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	14
Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.....	16
Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability	18

1. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 1.1. This Code sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to achieving and maintaining good corporate governance.
- 1.2. Monmouthshire County Council (the Council) is by nature, a complex organisation which affects the lives of all citizens in the area: As well as providing a diverse range of services, it also works with partner organisations which provide other public services. The Council's aims and priorities reflect these responsibilities.
- 1.3. The Council sees Corporate Governance as doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and also the culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and how it accounts to and engages with its citizens.
- 1.4. Strong, transparent and responsive governance enables the Council to put citizens first by pursuing its aims and priorities effectively, and by underpinning them with appropriate mechanisms for managing performance and risk. In order to maintain citizens' confidence, these mechanisms must be sound and be seen to be sound.
- 1.5. It is essential that there is confidence in our corporate governance and the Council must therefore ensure that:
 - as a democratic body, we engage with and account to our citizens and stakeholders effectively;
 - we conduct our business in accordance with the law and to proper standards;
 - public money is properly accounted for and is used economically, efficiently and effectively;
 - controls are proportionate to risk so as not to impede performance;
 - we continuously improve the way in which we function, in terms of effectiveness, quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability and innovation; and
 - we fulfil our purpose and meet our priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2017-22.
- 1.6. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.
- 1.7. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

2. The Governance Framework

2.1. The Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition produced by CIPFA and SOLACE (the Framework) defines governance as:

'Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.'

The Framework also states that

'To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entity's objectives while acting in the public interest at all times,

Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.

2.2. In local government, the governing body is the full council.

3. Background

3.1. The *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework* published by CIPFA and SOLACE in 2007 set the standard for local authority governance in the UK. CIPFA and SOLACE reviewed the Framework in 2015 to ensure it remained fit for purpose and published a revised Framework in spring 2016.

3.2. The new *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework* 2016 edition applies to annual governance statements prepared for the financial year 2016/17 onwards.

3.3. The new Framework introduced 7 new principles as follows:

- A) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
- D) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E) Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and string public financial management.
- G) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

COMMITMENTS TO GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also for how we use the resources under our stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes we have achieved. In addition, we have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, we can demonstrate the appropriateness of all our actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
<p>Behaving with integrity</p>	<p>A1 Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the Council</p> <p>A2 Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the Council and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)</p> <p>A3 Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions</p> <p>A4 Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members Code of Conduct in Constitution which reflects Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct)(Wales) Order 2016 ▪ Officers Code of Conduct in Constitution ▪ Registers of interests / hospitality ▪ Induction training ▪ Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution ▪ Member led Authority principles/document ▪ Member training programme ▪ Council Values — Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, Teamwork ▪ Whistleblowing Policy ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy ▪ Standards Committee ▪ Standards Committee Annual Report presented to Council ▪ Member Dispute Resolution ▪ Complaints procedure
<p>Demonstrating strong</p>	<p>A5 Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the Council's ethical standards and performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Values — Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, Teamwork ▪ Contract procedure rules

<p>commitment to ethical values</p>	<p>A6 Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Council's culture and operation</p> <p>A7 Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values</p> <p>A8 Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Council are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Codes of conduct for members and employees ▪ Financial procedure rules
<p>Respecting the rule of law</p>	<p>A9 Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations</p> <p>A10 Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements</p> <p>A11 Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders</p> <p>A12 Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively</p> <p>A13 Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member and Officer Code of Conduct in Constitution ▪ Role of Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer established in Constitution ▪ CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy ▪ Audit Committee ▪ Internal Audit Section ▪ Internal Audit Annual Report presented to Audit Committee ▪ External Auditors Annual Audit Letter ▪ Standards Committee ▪ Whistleblowing Policy ▪ Complaints procedure

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
<p>Openness</p>	<p>B1 Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating our commitment to openness</p> <p>B2 Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided</p> <p>B3 Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear</p> <p>B4 Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agendas published in advance of meetings ▪ Minutes published following meetings ▪ Democratic meetings live streaming on You Tube ▪ Decision making process described in Constitution ▪ Forward Plan published on internet showing key decisions to be made by Council and Cabinet ▪ Annual budget consultation ▪ Freedom of Information Scheme ▪ Public questions at Council, Cabinet and Select Committees ▪ Engagement with hard to reach groups such as BME, Disability and LGBT communities. As well as engagement with children and young people to meet the requirement of the UNCRC ▪ Publication of open data sets on the Council’s website
<p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</p>	<p>B5 Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably</p> <p>B6 Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well- Being Plan ▪ Monmouthshire Public Service Board Partnership arrangements and structure

	<p>B7 Ensuring that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change and a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit</p>	
<p>Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users</p>	<p>B8 A clear policy on the type of issues that the Council will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes</p> <p>B9 Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement</p> <p>B10 Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs</p> <p>B11 Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account</p> <p>B12 Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity</p> <p>B13 Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ward role of Councillors ▪ Consultations on the council website and social media platforms ▪ Annual Staff Survey ▪ Complaints Policy and Annual Report ▪ MTFP ▪ Complaints procedure ▪ Future Generations evaluation, including Equality Impact Assessment, on decision reports ▪ Strategic Equality Plan

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

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
<p>Defining Outcomes</p>	<p>C1 Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the Council's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the Council's overall strategy, planning and other decisions</p> <p>C2 Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer</p> <p>C3 Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available</p> <p>C4 Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes</p> <p>C5 Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report ▪ Service business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Monthly Financial Monitoring meetings held for each service area ▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Capital Review Programme
<p>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	<p>C6 Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision</p> <p>C7 Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the Council's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan covering 3 financial years approved annually by Council ▪ Corporate Plan ▪ Risk management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic risk register

	<p>intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints</p> <p>C8 Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs</p> <p>C9 Ensuring fair access to services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan ▪ Future Generations Evaluation, including Equality Impact Assessment, on decision making reports ▪ Service business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.
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Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource input while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
<p>Determining interventions</p>	<p>D1 Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided</p> <p>D2 Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan ▪ Scrutiny / Select Committee function ▪ Risk management policy and guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Finance and Legal implications in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports Report writing template and guidance ▪ Future Generations Evaluation (including Equality Impact Assessment) ▪ Results of consultation exercises
<p>Planning Interventions</p>	<p>D3 Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets</p> <p>D4 Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered</p> <p>D5 Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks</p> <p>D6 Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly Financial Monitoring meetings for each Directorate reviews progress and authorises corrective action where necessary ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan ▪ Annual budget setting process in place including consultation exercise ▪ Financial procedure rules ▪ Senior Management Structure ▪ Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

	<p>D7 Establishing appropriate local performance indicators (as well as relevant statutory or other national performance indicators) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured</p> <p>D8 Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly</p> <p>D9 Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium-term financial plan</p> <p>D10 Informing medium and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report ▪ Service business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register
<p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<p>D11 Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints</p> <p>D12 Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term</p> <p>D13 Ensuring the medium-term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet and scrutiny ▪ Mid-Year Budget Statement to Cabinet ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan ▪ Budget consultation ▪ Corporate Plan

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

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
<p>Developing the entity's capacity</p>	<p>E1 Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.</p> <p>E2 Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness</p> <p>E3 Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the Council's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently</p> <p>E4 Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular performance review f Check in Check Out for all staff ▪ Service planning process includes workforce planning ▪ People Strategy ▪ Quarterly financial reports to Cabinet and Select ▪ Partnership & collaborative working arrangements ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report ▪ Public Service Board Well-being Plan annual report ▪ Service business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area.
<p>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</p>	<p>E5 Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained</p> <p>E6 Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution ▪ Scheme of Delegation published in Constitution ▪ Monthly One to One meetings are held involving the Leader. Cabinet Members, Chief Executive, Chief

	<p>E7 Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure, whereby the chief executive leads the authority in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority</p> <p>E8 Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the Council to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged, • ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis, • ensuring personal, organisation and system-wide development through shared learning, including • lessons learnt from both internal and external governance weaknesses <p>E9 Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation</p> <p>E10 Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections</p> <p>E11 Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs</p> <p>E12 Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental well being</p>	<p>Officers, Heads of Service and 3rd tier staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councillor Training Programme developed based on a Training Needs Assessment ▪ Scrutiny member development programme ▪ Annual performance review for all staff under CICO ▪ Corporate training and development programme ▪ Occupational Health and Wellbeing Policy exists with aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees to enable them to achieve their full potential at work ▪ Internal and external audit reports and action plans
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Principle F — Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and string public financial management

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will ensure financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
Managing Risk	<p>F1 Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making</p> <p>F2 Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring they are working effectively</p> <p>F3 Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk Management Policy and Guidance ▪ Whole Authority Strategic Risk Register ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area, including service risk registers ▪ Strategic Risk Register reported to Audit Committee and Cabinet
Managing performance	<p>F4 Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning specification, execution and independent post-implementation review</p> <p>F5 Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the Council's financial, social and environmental position and outlook</p> <p>F6 Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made, thereby enhancing the Council's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan produced and reviewed annually ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area. ▪ Quarterly, six monthly & annual Performance Monitoring Reports ▪ Director of Social Services Annual report ▪ Chief Officer Children & Young People Annual Report ▪ Scrutiny function

	<p>F7 Providing members and senior management with regular reports on progress towards outcome achievement</p> <p>F8 Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post-implementation reporting (eg financial statements)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bi-monthly Directorate and Financial monitoring meetings
Robust internal control	<p>F9 Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives</p> <p>F10 Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis</p> <p>F11 Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place</p> <p>F12 Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor</p> <p>F13 Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment • that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit Committee provides assurance on effectiveness on internal control, risk management and governance ▪ Audit Committee Annual Report to Council ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy ▪ Role of Internal Audit Section ▪ Annual Plans approved by Audit Committee ▪ Annual Reports to Audit Committee ▪ Annual Governance Statement
Managing data	<p>F14 Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data</p> <p>F15 Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies</p> <p>F16 Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data Protection Policy ▪ Information Management Strategy ▪ Information management governance arrangements ▪ Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) in place ▪ Information Asset Register ▪ Information sharing guidance published ▪ Information Risk policy ▪ Annual National and Local performance Indicator data collection process and internal audit arrangements.
Strong public financial management	<p>F17 Ensuring financial management supports both long-term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial procedure rules in Constitution ▪ Contract procedure rules in Constitution

	F18 Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accounting Instructions on Intranet▪ Spending Restrictions document on Intranet
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Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

Sub-Principles	The Council is committed to:	What is in place to support this?
<p>Implementing good practice in transparency</p>	<p>G1 Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate</p> <p>G2 Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report writing template and guidance
<p>Implementing good practices in reporting</p>	<p>G3 Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of resources</p> <p>G4 Ensuring owners and senior management own the result</p> <p>G5 Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (annual governance statement)</p> <p>G6 Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate</p> <p>G7 Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Statement of Accounts audited by external auditor and approved by Council ▪ Code of Corporate Governance based on CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 2016 ▪ Annual Governance Statement ▪ Corporate Plan Annual Performance Report ▪ Service Business Plans produced annually and reviewed quarterly by each service area
<p>Assurance and effective accountability</p>	<p>G8 Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Audit provided by Wales Audit Office ▪ Performance of Internal Audit Section monitored by Audit Committee

	<p>G9 Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon</p> <p>G10 Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations</p> <p>G11 Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement</p> <p>G12 Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation of WAO and Internal Audit recommendations monitored by Audit Committee ▪ Peer Review, Corporate Assessment and Corporate Governance Review action plan monitored by Corporate Management Team ▪ Annual Governance Statement
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