# STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## THURSDAY 26 MAY 2011

## CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### Report by the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

## Introduction

1.  The Strategy and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has within its Terms of Reference responsibility for corporate governance. The views of the Committee are therefore sought on the proposed revisions to the Local Code of Corporate Governance. These changes to the Code are highlighted for ease of reference, in the Annex to this report.

2.  The Code is a key feature of the Council's corporate governance framework. The current Code was last approved by the Council's Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee in March 2010 and is reviewed annually.

3.  The Monitoring Officer has undertaken a review of the Code, involving key managers, and has updated the evidence. The review has taken place at a time of significant change for the Council, in the context of a new Coalition Government and the different emphases and priorities that this has brought both for the Council and for the governance regime for local government. These changes are reflected in the Code.

## Origin and purpose of the Code

4.  The Local Code of Corporate Governance builds on the key elements of good governance including:

    *   robust systems and processes
    *   effective leadership
    *   high standards of behaviour
    *   a culture based on openness and honesty and
    *   an external focus on the needs of service users and the public.

5.  A framework of national guidance on corporate governance was therefore developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives. This has been widely adopted by individual local authorities – including Oxfordshire - within their local codes. Until recently, external auditors' judgements on the Council's performance also took the Code into account. This is no longer the case.

6.  Now, within the changing context of local government, with less emphasis on external assessment, the Code serves more as a practical evidence base for the Council as to its own practical commitment to good governance. The

Code therefore fulfils an important part of the Council's corporate governance framework. It sets out how the Council is achieving good governance.

7. It is proposed that the Code now be formally reviewed every two years.

## Content and amendments

8. The Code is structured around six principles:

- An emphasis on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community; creating and implementing a vision for the local area
- Councillors and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
- Promoting the values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- Developing the capacity and capability of councillors and officers to be effective
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

9. A range of evidence is therefore listed under each of these themes within the Code. Key officers, including the Chief Executive, have suggested some amendments to it. These are highlighted in bold text in the revised draft attached. No major changes are envisaged. Rather, the suggested amendments update the 'evidence column' to include more recent initiatives, policies and plans which demonstrate the Council's compliance.

## RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

   **(a)    comment upon the revised Code**

   **(b)    subject to any amendments agreed at the meeting, amend and update the Code of Corporate Governance for Oxfordshire County Council**

   **(c)    agree that the Code be reviewed every two years.**

P G CLARK
County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers: Nil
Contact Officer:      Peter Clark Tel: (01865 815363)
May 2011

**Annex:**

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="3"><strong>Principle 1 – Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Principles:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td rowspan="3">1.1 exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users</td>
<td>1.1.1 develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision</td>
<td>Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan<br>Oxfordshire 2030 (Countrywide Community Strategy)<br>Comprehensive Equality Policy<br>Children & Young People's Plan and the Local Transport Plan</td>
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<td>1.1.2 review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements</td>
<td><strong>Annual refresh of Corporate Plan Directorate Business Strategies Corporate Balanced Scorecard – quarterly reporting to CCMT and Cabinet</strong><br>Oxfordshire 2030 –cabinet report on 2030<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework</td>
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<td>1.1.3 ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners</td>
<td>Oxfordshire 2030: Sustainable Community Strategy plus thematic partnerships' strategies and plans<br>Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan<br>Partnership update reports to informal Cabinet and every other Full Council meeting 3 times a year</td>
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| | | 1.1.4 publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance | Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme<br>Progress on accounts monitored within the Corporate Plan<br>Annual Governance Statement (incorporating Statement on Internal Control)<br>Annual Audit Letter |
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| 1.2 | ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning | 1.2.1 decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available | Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan<br>Directorate Business Strategies and individual service plans<br>Oxfordshire 2030<br>Charter Mark Accreditation<br>External inspection regimes – from Ofsted and CQC |
| | | 1.2.2 put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery | Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure – **delegated arrangements to build on effective local decision making supported by corporate advice.**<br>**Comprehensive intranet pages of support including templates and FAQs to ensure consistency of approach**<br>Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter<br>Quarterly Performance Reports to CCMT and Cabinet<br>Scrutiny, Service and Cabinet Reviews |
| 1.3 | ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money | 1.3.1 decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value | Council's Business Strategy<br>External Auditors (District Audit)<br>Report to Audit Committee on Best Value |

| | for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions | Annual Governance Statement Medium Term Financial Plan Services and Resource Planning Process |
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| **Principle 2 – Councillors and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles** | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 2.1 ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function | 2.1.1 set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the cabinet and of the cabinet members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice | The Constitution Schemes of Delegation Portfolio Holders Reports to Council The Council, Cabinet and Council Committee Agendas and Minutes Scrutiny Committees recommendations to Cabinet The role of Scrutiny in Policy Development and Review (Terms of Reference – Constitution Article 7) Appraisals Training to ensure understanding of roles and responsibilities |
| | 2.1.2 set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of county councillors and of senior officers | The Constitution, including: <br>• Code of Conduct <br>• Protocol on Member' Rights and Responsibilities <br>• Protocol on Member/Officer Relations <br>• Member Champions (Article 2, Appendix 1 of the Constitution) |

| 2.2 ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between councillors and officers and that the responsibilities of councillors and officers are carried out to a high standard | 2.2.1 determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required | The Constitution<br>Annual Review of the Constitution<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>**Directorate schemes of delegation** |
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| | 2.2.2 make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management | Chief Executive<br>Job Description<br>The Constitution<br>Scheme of Delegation |
| | 2.2.3 develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained | Protocol on Member/Officer Relations<br>Regular Meetings<br>Appraisal<br>Joint Staff Briefings (One Team) |
| | 2.2.4 make a senior officer (the S151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control | Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer)<br>Member of County Council Management Team<br>Job Description<br>Constitution<br>Role of Officers – Intranet<br>Scheme of Delegation |

| | | 2.2.5 make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with | Head of **Law and Governance** and County Solicitor (Monitoring Officer) Regular attendance at County Council Management Team as ex officio member Job Description Constitution Scheme of Delegation Role of Officers – Intranet Monitoring Officer Protocol Corporate Governance Assurance Framework |
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| 2.3 | ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other | 2.3.1 develop protocols to ensure effective communication between councillors and officers in their respective roles | Protocol on Member/Officer Relations Constitution Protocol on Members' Rights and Responsibilities Political Group Leader Meetings Regular briefing meetings |
| | | 2.3.2 set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of councillors and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable) | Independent Remuneration Panel Published Scheme of Allowances Constitution Job Evaluation Joint Consultative Committee Job Descriptions |
| | | 2.3.3 ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery | Quarterly Performance Reports Balanced Scorecard Independent Inspections Charter Mark Accreditation |

| | 2.3.4 ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated | Corporate Plan, **Directorate Business Strategies and individual service plans** Oxfordshire 2030 (Community Strategy The Quality Standard for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; EQIA process; Social Inclusion Reference Group Service and Resource Planning Corporate Consultation Programme (including Citizens' Panel, Budget Consultation, Residents Surveys, Statutory Surveys), service level consultations eConsult Portal, Customer group specific mechanisms (including Sounding Boards, users groups etc.) |
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| | 2.3.5 when working in partnership, ensure that councillors are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority | Declarations of Interest and Related Party Transactions (Local Government Act 1972 Section 117) Guidance to Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies (endorsed by Cabinet, Nov 2009 |

| | 2.3.6 when working in partnership:<br>• ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership<br>• ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions | **Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework Partnership guidelines – on website**<br>**Partnership development group - meets 6 times a year which consists of the main lead officers for each of the thematic partnerships. This meeting is used to discuss changes in partnership focus and progress made in priority areas.** |
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| **Principle 3 -  Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour** | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 3.1  ensuring councillors and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance | 3.1.1  ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect | Lead Oxfordshire Programme – including 360° Reviews <br> Publication Scheme <br> Standards Committee Work Programme 2010 - 2012 <br> Equality and Diversity Schemes <br> Codes of Conduct <br> The Council's Values (CHOICE) <br> County Council Management Team's – "Agreed Team Behaviours" <br> Whistleblowing Policy <br> Monitoring Complaints – Standards Committee (Monitoring Officers Annual Report) <br> Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officer Group <br> General Publics Right to attend and address Council Meetings and submit Petitions <br> Scrutiny Process <br> Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) |

| | 3.1.2 ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of councillors and officers, of work between councillors and officers and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols | Members' Code of Conduct<br>Councillors' Planning Code of Practice<br>Officers' Code of Conduct<br>Gifts and hospitality registers (Member and Officer)<br>Protocol Member/Officer Relations<br>Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework.<br>Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officer Group **– now within the Corporate Governance Working Group**<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference and Annual Report |
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| | | 3.1.3 put in place arrangements to ensure that councillors and officers of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice | Members' Code of Conduct<br>Councillors' Planning Code of Practice<br>Officers' Code of Conduct<br>Declarations of Interest Policy (Member and Officer)<br>Gifts and Hospitality Policy (Member and Officer)<br>Corporate and Directorate Induction<br>Whistleblowing Policy (part of Raising Concerns at Work Policy)<br>Training and Seminar Briefings<br>Corporate & Directorate Equality groups; the Equality Framework for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; SCIA process<br>Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officers Group – now within the Corporate Governance Working Group<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference and Annual Report |
| 3.2 | ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective | 3.2.1 develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and officers reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with councillors, officers, the community and partners | The County Council's Values (CHOICE)<br>CHOICE Awards<br>Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan<br>Oxfordshire County Council's Website<br>Statutory equality schemes; diversity champions |

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| | 3.2.2 put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice | Ethical Governance Audit<br>Corporate Governance Working Group Terms of Reference<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Group Terms of Reference<br>Monitoring Officer Group<br>Service Reviews<br>Standards Committee Work Programme 2010 – 2012<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>Annual Monitoring Officer report |
| | 3.2.3 develop and maintain an effective standards committee | Ethical Governance Audit<br>Standards Committee Work Programme 2009 – 2012<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference<br>Four Independent Councillors on Standards Committee<br>Cabinet member on Standards Committee<br>Independent Chairman and Deputy Chairman<br>Person Specification for Independent Councillors<br>Monitoring Officer Group (now within the Corporate Governance Working Group)<br>County District and City Monitoring Officer Liaison Group |

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| | 3.2.4 use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority | **Corporate Plan, Directorate Business Strategies, business strategies and individual plans** <br> Ethical Governance Audit <br> Website <br> Corporate and Directorate Induction Processes <br> One Team Events <br> The County Council's Values (CHOICE) |
| | 3.2.5 in pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision-making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively | Children's Strategy Board (Children Young People & Families) <br> Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework. |

| Principle 4 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 4.1 being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny | 4.1.1 develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible | **Financial Management Training**<br>Scrutiny Review of Budgets<br>Exercise of Call-in Procedures<br>Constitution<br>Scrutiny Review<br>Scrutiny Work Programme<br>Scrutiny Annual Report<br>Scrutiny Handbook |
| | 4.1.2 develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based | Committee Services<br>Committee Agendas and Minutes<br>Committee Reports Template<br>Constitution<br>Capital Handbook<br>Monitoring Officer Annual Review of Registers<br>Publish and **consult on SCIAs** |

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| | 4.1.3   put in place arrangements to safeguard councillors and officers against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice | Declarations of Interest (Members and Officers)<br>Monitoring Officer Annual Review of Registers<br>Codes of Conduct |
| | 4.1.4   develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee | **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Self Assessment**<br>External Auditors Inspection<br>Audit Working Group (Co-opted Independent Chairman)<br>Regular training<br>Constitution<br>Independent Councillors<br>Independent Councillor provides scrutiny<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework |

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| | | 4.1.5  ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints | General public – Whistleblowing Policy<br>Annual Report (Complaints) to County Council Management Team<br>Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter<br>Complaints Coordinators Group Meetings<br>Corporate Complaints Policy<br>Guidance to staff handling complaints<br>Statutory Complaints Procedures<br>Monitoring Complaints – Standards Committee (Monitoring Officers Annual Report)<br>Charter Mark Accreditation |
| 4.2 | having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs | 4.2.1  ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications | Oxfordshire Data Observatory<br>Committee Reports Template<br>Report Timetables<br>Cabinet Forward Plan<br>Report Clearance process<br>Specialist guidance available on the Council's intranet 'Insite' in the support section<br>Monitoring of expenses claimed |
| | | 4.2.2  ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately | Committee Reports Template<br>Monitoring Officer  Group<br>Legal Management Team Meetings<br>Special Risk Notices |

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| 4.3 ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place | 4.3.1 ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with councillors and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs | Risk Management Strategy Compliance with Programme and Project Management Framework Quarterly Reports Internal Control Checklist Annual Governance Statement |
| | 4.3.2 ensure that effective arrangements for whistle-blowing are in place to which officers, and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access | Whistleblowing Policy General Public Whistleblowing Policy Monitoring Officer Annual Report |
| 4.4 using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area | 4.4.1 actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine (beyond the legal powers of the council) but also strive to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities | Constitution, including: <br>• Finance Procedure Rules <br>• Contract Procedure Rules <br>• Committee Reports Template <br>Corporate Legal strategy Implementing New Legislation Protocol Virement Rules Financial Regulations Council's Policies and Procedures Monitoring Officer Group |
| | 4.4.2 recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law | Implementing New Legislation Protocol Corporate Legal Strategy Monitoring Officer Protocol Constitution Committee Report Checklist Service Level Agreements between Directorate and Legal Services. |

| | 4.4.3  observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law<br><br>• rationality, legality and natural justice<br>• into their procedures and decision making processes | Corporate Legal Strategy<br>Monitoring Officer Protocol<br>Constitution<br>Committee Report Checklist<br>Service Level Agreements between Directorate and Legal Services.<br>Monitoring Officer Group<br>**Budget SCIAs sent to all councillors** |
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| **Principle 5 -   Developing the capacity and capability of councillors and officers to be effective** | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 5.1  making sure that councillors and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles | 5.1.1  provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for councillors and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis | Corporate and Directorate Induction<br>Corporate Investors in People Accreditation<br>Learning and Development Plan<br>Induction and Review New Starters<br>Appraisals<br>Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Plan<br>**Councillor Development Group**<br>**Financial Management** Training<br>Member and Committee training<br>Link Officer Scheme for Councillors<br>**Peer support champions schemes** |

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| | 5.1.2 ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority | Schemes of Delegation<br>Roles of Officers – Intranet<br>Constitution<br>Job Descriptions<br>Appraisals<br>Monitoring Officer Protocol<br>Learning and development Plan<br>Staff Survey<br>Induction – Briefings – Road-shows – Seminars – Staff surveys<br>Ethical governance Audit 2007<br>Lead Oxfordshire Programme |
| 5.2 developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group | 5.2.1 assess the skills required by councillors and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively | Councillors Development Training Programme<br>**Councillor Development Group**<br>Appraisals<br>Attendance at Conferences/Seminars |
| | 5.2.2 develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed | Compulsory Professional Development Training<br>Pension Fund – External Fund Managers |
| | 5.2.3 ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual councillors and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs | Member Appraisals<br>Audit Committee Training Self Assessment |

| 5.3 encouraging new talent for officers and councillors of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal | 5.3.1 ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority | The Framework for Local Government Equality and Diversity Schemes<br>An Equality Employment Report is completed every year, targets for employment are reviewed annually and included in the HR business plan. **Comprehensive data on workforce diversity will be published in the website for the Council and schools after July 2011.**<br>The Council's statutory Equality Schemes **will be replaced by Equality Objectives to be agreed and monitored by Cabinet from December 2011**<br>External Assessment of the Equality Framework<br>Oxfordshire County Council Learning & Development Plan ensures all officers are enabled to mainstream equality.<br>Progress monitored by Social Inclusion Reference Group chaired by Cabinet member.<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy<br>eConsult Portal<br>Various service user panels including:<br>Children and young people's Sounding Board<br>Children and Young People Involvement Network (ChYPIN)<br>Children in Care Council (CiCC)<br>Citizens' Panel<br>Charter Mark Accreditation<br>Governor Opportunities and Training<br>Work Experience Scheme linking with Oxfordshire Employment Service & Job Centre Plus<br>Protocols for Work Placements established with Refugee Resource |

|  |  | Democracy Videos encouraging use of democratic rights **and DVDs subtitled in 6 community languages** |
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|  | 5.3.2 to encourage participation and development ensure that the following are in place:<br>• officers career structures; and<br>• an effective councillors development programme | Officers:<br>• Compulsory Professional Development<br>• Learning and Development Programme<br>• Apprenticeships<br>• Emerging Leader's programme<br>• Career progression scheme set up in ICT.<br>• Job Finder Scheme<br>Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Plan |

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

| Supporting Principles: | Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to: | Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements: |
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| 6.1  exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships | 6.1.1  make clear to themselves, all officers and the community to whom they are accountable and for what | Constitution<br>Scrutiny Review<br>Scrutiny Work Programme<br>Scrutiny Annual Report<br>Scrutiny Handbook<br>Council Website – Meetings and Decision Making |
| | 6.1.2  consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required | Joint Health<br>Database of Stakeholders<br>Primary Care Trusts<br>Oxford University<br>Oxfordshire 2030: Sustainable Communities Strategy |
| | 6.1.3 produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function | Scrutiny Committees Annual Report |
| 6.2   taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning | 6.2.1   ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively | A corporate Communications Strategy guides delivery of external and internal communications through council publications, the internet and intranet sites and the media. The effectiveness of this service is closely monitored and regularly evaluated through surveys and focus groups. |

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| | 6.2.2  hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality | Constitution<br>Monitoring Officer's Annual Report<br>Forward Plan for Cabinet includes decision which are not 'Key' decisions<br>Delegated decisions taken in public<br>Monitoring of exempt items by Monitoring Officer Group – now within Corporate Governance Working Group |
| | 6.2.3  ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognize that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands | Consultation Team<br>Independent review of Consultation Arrangements completed 01/08<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy and Action Plan<br>Consulting Diversity Guide;<br>Consultation database of community groups.<br>Closer to Communities Strategy<br>The Equality Framework for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; EQIA process<br>**Big Society framework/Big Society fund**<br>**Petition Scheme and ePetition facility**<br>**Modern.gov interactive meetings management system** |

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| | 6.2.4 establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result | Duty to Involve Guidance<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy<br>eConsult Portal<br>**ePetitions facility** |
| | 6.2.5 on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period | Corporate Plan<br>Statement of Accounts<br>Oxfordshire County Council publishes a rolling five-year corporate plan on an annual basis, which sets out our vision and priorities; explains our planning framework and links with the five-year Medium Term Financial Plan.<br>**Committees, working groups, Boards and services produce summaries of achievements, including performance information through balanced scorecards for services and corporately**. We produce an annual summary of our accounts, which are also published in full. |

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| | 6.2.6 ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its officers and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so | Constitution Strategy Access to Information Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy<br><br>The Council's Website **£500 spend – publication. Freedom of Information policies and devolved arrangements within directorate and supporting info, advice and templates** |
| 6.3 making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to officers | 6.3.1 develop and maintain a clear policy on how officers and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making | Organisation Development Strategy Programme of staff research, including staff surveys and staff panel activities Appraisal Process Manager's Competency Assessment The Human Resources and Organisational Development Strategy Various focus groups are held to "test" policy/process developments and we have various fora involving our unions and officers representative groups. |