

## WHAT IS CORPORATE GOVERNANCE?

1. Governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes and cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities.
2. Corporate governance in public bodies can be defined as “the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives”. It can be further defined as including “robust systems and processes, effective leadership and high standards of behaviour, a culture based on openness and honesty and an external focus on the needs of service users and the public”.

## GUIDANCE AND FRAMEWORK

3. Corporate Governance as an issue came to prominence in early 1990 following several major financial scandals. Subsequent reports that looked at local government identified ten principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership, respect for others, duty to uphold the law and stewardship (using resources prudently).
4. In 2012 Cipfa & SOLACE produced an updated guidance and framework with the identified principles that should underpin the governance of each local authority, and a structured approach to assist individual authorities to achieve good governance.
5. Good governance means:
  - Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
  - Councillors and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
  - Promoting 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.
6. The Framework urges local authorities to test their structures against these principles by:
  1. Reviewing their existing governance arrangements against the Framework
  2. Developing and maintaining an up-to-date local code of governance including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness

3. Preparing a governance statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own code on an annual basis, including how they have monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes for the coming period.
  
7. The preparation and publication of an annual governance statement in accordance with this Framework is necessary to meet the statutory requirement set out in Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 for authorities to prepare a statement of internal control in accordance with “proper practices”.
  - Internal control and risk management are increasingly recognised as important elements of good Corporate Governance.
  - The scope of internal control spans the whole range of the Council’s activities and includes controls designed to ensure that:
    - The Council’s policies are implemented in practice;
    - High quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively;
    - The Council’s values and ethical standards are met;
    - Laws and Regulations are complied with
    - Required procedures are adhered to;
    - Financial statements and other published performance information is accurate and reliable;
    - Human, financial, environmental and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
  
8. The Regulations place a requirement on the Council to conduct at least an annual review of the effectiveness of its internal controls and identify areas where improvements can be made.

## **POSITION IN OXFORDSHIRE**

9. The implementation of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended) required the production of a Statement on Internal Control, which formed part of the Council’s Statement of Accounts. The Council’s Cabinet determined that this statutory assessment was the preferred assurance statement for the Council on Corporate Governance matters. The Audit Committee has approved a Corporate Governance Assurance Framework, which sets out the Corporate Governance arrangements within the Council and sets out the roles and responsibilities of key Officers, Councillors and Committees within that process.
  
10. This Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out how Oxfordshire County Council complies with the requirements of the Code and identifies key documents, which provide detailed information as to how the Council ensures these Corporate Governance principles are adhered to.

11. Reviewed and updated by the **Audit & Governance Committee.**

12. Review Date: **April 2014**

P G Clark  
County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

**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**

<b>Supporting Principles:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</b>	<b>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</b>
<p>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</p>	<p>1.1.1 develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision</p>	<p>Corporate Plan 2013 - 2018                      Community-led Plans and Action                      Financial Plan 2012 - 2017                      Equality Policy 2012 – 2017                      Joint Physical Disability Strategy 2012 - 2015                      OCC Fire &amp; Rescue service Community Risk Management Plan 2013 - 2018  <b>Children &amp; Young People's Plan 2013 – 2014</b>  <b>Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2030</b>  <b>Annual Governance Statement</b></p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Corporate Plan                      Directorate and Service Business Strategies                      Community-led Plans and Action                      Oxfordshire Economic Assessment                      Performance Reports                      Scrutiny Committees                      Locality Meetings                      Cabinet Advisory Groups                      Cabinet Forward Plan                      Corporate Governance Assurance Framework                      OCC Fire &amp; Rescue Service Annual Report</p>

	<p>1.1.3 ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners</p>	<p><b>Oxfordshire Partnership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Environment &amp; Waste</b></li> <li>● <b>Safer Communities</b></li> <li>● <b>Spatial Planning and Infrastructure</b></li> <li>● <b>Stronger Communities Alliance</b></li> <li>● <b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b></li> <li>● <b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b></li> <li>● <b>Local Enterprise</b></li> </ul>
	<p>1.1.4 publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance</p>	<p>Financial Plan and Capital Programme Annual Governance Statement External Audit and Inspection Letter OCC Fire &amp; Rescue Service Annual Report</p>
<p>1.2 ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan Directorate and Service Business Strategies <b>District Audits (External Auditors)</b> Report to Audit &amp; Governance Committee Quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet Health &amp; Wellbeing Board <b>External inspection regimes – from Ofsted and CQC</b></p>
	<p>1.2.2 put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery</p>	<p>Performance Scrutiny Committee Cabinet Advisory Groups Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure <b>Quarterly Performance Reports to CCMT and Cabinet</b> Health &amp; Wellbeing Board Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter Complaints Coordinators Group Meetings <b>Fire &amp; Rescue Service Operational Assessment Peer Review</b></p>

<p>1.3 ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money</p>	<p>1.3.1 decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions</p>	<p><b>Business Efficiency Strategy</b>  <b>External Auditors (District Audit) Report</b> to Audit &amp; Governance Committee on Best Value  Future First Programme Board  <b>Oxfordshire Partnership meetings twice yearly, and annual report from partnerships to Council</b>  Corporate Plan  Annual Governance Statement (incorporating Statement on Internal Control)  OCC Fire &amp; Rescue Service Statement of Assurance  Medium Term Financial Plan  Financial Procedure Rules  Services and Resource Planning Process  Managers personal development toolkit  Managers competency framework  Sustainable procurement guidance</p>
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<b>Principle 2 – Councillors and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles</b>		
<b>Supporting Principles:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</b>	<b>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</b>
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 <b>Article 7</b> ) Appraisals Training to ensure understanding of roles and responsibilities Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework
	2.1.2 set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of county councillors and of senior officers	The Constitution, <b>including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Code of Conduct</b></li> <li>• <b>Protocol on Member’ Rights and Responsibilities</b></li> <li>• <b>Protocol on Member/Officer Relations</b></li> <li>• <b>Member Champions (Article 2, Appendix 1 of the Constitution)</b></li> </ul>

<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>The Constitution Annual Review of the Constitution Corporate Governance Assurance Framework</p>
	<p>2.2.2 make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management</p>	<p>Chief Executive Job Description The Constitution Scheme of Delegation</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Protocol on Member/Officer Relations Regular Meetings Appraisal Joint Staff Briefings (One Team)</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer) Member of County Council Management Team Job Description Constitution Role of Officers – Intranet Scheme of Delegation</p>



	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 & Culture, County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer Regular attendance at County Council Management Team <b>as ex officio member</b> Job Description Constitution Scheme of Delegation Role of Officers – Intranet Monitoring Officer Protocol Corporate Governance Assurance Framework
2.3 ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each know 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 <b>Regular briefing meetings</b>
	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	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	Annual Report Quarterly Performance Reports Balanced Scorecard Independent Inspections

	<p>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</p>	<p>Corporate, Directorate and Service Plans Oxfordshire 2030 (Community Strategy) Community-led Plans &amp; Actions The Quality Standard for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; SCIA process; Social Inclusion Reference Group Service and Resource Planning Corporate Consultation Programme (including Citizens’ Panel, Budget Consultation, Residents Surveys, Statutory Surveys), <b>service level consultations</b> <b>eConsult Portal,</b> <b>customer group specific mechanisms (including Sounding Boards, users groups etc.)</b> OCC Fire &amp; Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2013 – 2018</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p><b>Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework</b> Declarations of Interest and Related Party Transactions (Local Government Act 1972 Section 117) Guidance to Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies</p>
	<p>2.3.6 when working in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership Working strategy Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework Partnership Agreements Action Plan for improving and monitoring Governance .</p>

<b>Principle 3 - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour</b>		
<b>Supporting Principles:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</b>	<b>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</b>
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	Reviews Publication Scheme Audit & Governance Committee Work Programme Equality and Diversity Schemes Codes of Conduct The Council's Values (CHOICE) County Council Management Team's – "Agreed Team Behaviours" Whistleblowing Policy Monitoring Complaints – Audit & Governance Committee (Monitoring Officers Annual Report)
		Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officer Group General Publics Right to attend and address Council Meetings and submit Petitions Scrutiny Process Equality Impact Assessments (SCIA)

	<p>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</p>	<p>Councillors' Code of Conduct  Councillors' Planning Code of Practice  Officers' Code of Conduct  Gifts and hospitality registers (Member and Officer)  Protocol Member/Officer Relations  Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework sets standards roles and responsibilities.  Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officer Group  Corporate Governance Assurance Framework  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Terms of Reference and Annual Report</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Councillors' Code of Conduct  Councillors' Planning Code of Practice  Councillors' Register of Interests  Officers' Code of Conduct  Declarations of Interest Policy (Officer)  Gifts and Hospitality Policy (Officer)  Corporate and Directorate Induction  Whistleblowing Policy  Resolving Grievances Policy  Training and Seminar Briefings  Corporate &amp; Directorate Equality groups; the Equality Framework for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; SCIA process  Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officers Group  Corporate Governance Assurance Framework  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Terms of Reference and Annual Report</p>

<p>3.2 ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>The County Council's Values (CHOICE)  <b>CHOICE Awards</b>  Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan  Oxfordshire County Council's Website</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Ethical Governance Audit  Corporate Governance Working Group Terms of Reference  Corporate Governance Assurance Group Terms of Reference  Monitoring Officer Group  Service Reviews  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Work Programme  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Terms of Reference  Corporate Governance Assurance Framework  Annual Monitoring Officer report</p>
	<p>3.2.3 develop and maintain an effective Audit &amp; Governance committee</p>	<p>Ethical Governance Audit  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Work Programme  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Terms of Reference  Recruitment and Retention of Independent Persons to assist Monitoring Officer  Person Specification for Independent Persons  Monitoring Officer Group  <b>County District and City Monitoring Officer Liaison Group</b></p>

	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, Directorate and service Plans Ethical Governance Audit Website Corporate and Directorate Induction Processes One Team Events Agile Working Programme 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 & Young Peoples Partnership Board (Children Education & Families) Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework sets standards roles and responsibilities. Partnership Agreements Partnership Governance Review 2008

<b>Principle 4 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk</b>		
<b>Supporting Principles:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</b>	<b>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</b>
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	Budget Training Scrutiny Review of Budgets Exercise of Call-in Procedures Constitution Scrutiny Review Scrutiny Work Programme Scrutiny Annual Report Scrutiny Handbook Fundamental Service Review Programme

	<p>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</p>	<p>Committee Services  Committee Agendas and Minutes  Committee Reports Template  Constitution  Capital Handbook  Monitoring Officer Annual Review of Registers  Published SCiAs</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Declarations of Interest (Members and Officers)  Monitoring Officer Annual Review of Registers  Codes of Conduct</p>
	<p>4.1.4 develop and maintain an effective audit &amp; governance 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</p>	<p>Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Self Assessment  External Auditors Inspection  Audit Working Group Regular training  Constitution  Independent Persons  Corporate Governance Assurance Framework</p>

	<p>4.1.5 ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints</p>	<p>General public – Whistleblowing Policy  Annual Report (Complaints) to County Council Management Team  Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter  Complaints Coordinators Group Meetings  Corporate Complaints Policy  <b>Guidance to staff handling complaints</b>  Statutory Complaints Procedures  Monitoring Complaints – Audit &amp; Governance Committee (Monitoring Officers Annual Report)</p>
<p>4.2 having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs</p>	<p>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 and financial issues and their implications</p>	<p>Community-led Plans &amp; Actions quarterly reporting to Public Service Board (also includes reporting on local targets in Oxfordshire 2030  Oxfordshire Insight  Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy and underlying Joint Strategic Needs Assessment  Committee Reports Template  Report Timetables  Cabinet Forward Plan  Report Clearance process  Specialist guidance available on the Council’s intranet ‘Insite’ in the support section  Monitoring of expenses claimed</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Committee Reports Template  Monitoring Officer Group  Legal Management Team Meetings  Special Risk Notices</p>



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 External Auditor's <b>(District Audit)</b> Assessment Quarterly Reports Internal Control Checklist Annual Report OCC Fire & Rescue Service Community Risk Management Plan 2013 - 2018 Annual Governance Statement (incorporating Statement on Internal Control) OCC Fire & Rescue Service Statement of Assurance
	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance Procedure Rules</li> <li>• Contract Procedure Rules</li> <li>• Committee Reports Template</li> </ul> Corporate Legal strategy Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rationality, legality and natural justice</li> <li>• into their procedures and decision making processes</li> </ul>	Corporate Legal Strategy Monitoring Officer Protocol Constitution Committee Report Checklist Service Level Agreements between Directorate and Legal Services. Monitoring Officer Group

<b>Principle 5 - Developing the capacity and capability of councillors and officers to be effective</b>		
<b>Supporting Principles:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</b>	<b>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</b>
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 Corporate Investors in People Accreditation Learning and Development Plan Induction and Review New Starters Appraisals <b>Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Group</b> Budget and Finance Training Member and Committee training Link Officer Scheme for Councillors

	<p>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</p>	<p>Schemes of Delegation  Roles of Officers – Intranet  Constitution  Job Descriptions  Appraisals  Monitoring Officer Protocol  Learning and development Plan  Staff Survey  Induction – Briefings – Road-shows – Seminars – Staff surveys  External Auditor’s <b>(District Audit)</b> Assessment Ethical governance Audit  Lead Oxfordshire Programme</p>
<p>5.2 developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Councillors Development Training Programme  Appraisals  Attendance at Conferences/Seminars</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Compulsory Professional Development Training  Ethical Governance Audit  Pension Fund – External Fund Managers</p>
	<p>5.2.3 ensure that 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</p>	<p>Member Appraisals  Audit &amp; Governance Committee Training Self-Assessment</p>

<p>5.3 encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal</p>	<p>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</p>	<p><b>The Framework for Local Government Equality and Diversity Schemes</b>  <b>An Equality Employment Report is completed every year, targets for employment are reviewed annually and included in the HR business plan.</b>  <b>The Council's statutory Equality Schemes (see below) are summarised with targets in a single action plan and agreed on an annual basis within business plans:</b>  Comprehensive Equality Policy; Disability Equality Scheme  Gender Equality Scheme; Race Equality Scheme  Social Inclusion Strategy  Strategy on 'Harder to Reach' Groups  Social Inclusion Reference Group  Best Value Performance Indicator targets to be representative of the community at all levels by race, disability and gender.  <b>External Assessment of the Equality Framework</b> Oxfordshire County Council Learning &amp; Development Plan ensures all officers are enabled to mainstream equality.  Progress monitored by Social Inclusion Reference Group chaired by Cabinet member.  <b>Oxfordshire Consultation &amp; Involvement Strategy</b>  <b>eConsult Portal</b>  Various service user panels including:  Children and young people's Sounding Board  Children and Young People Involvement Network (ChYPIN)  Children in Care Council (CiCC)  Citizens Panel  Governor Opportunities and Training  Work Experience Scheme linking with Oxfordshire  Employment Service &amp; Job Centre Plus  Protocols for Work Placements established with Refugee Resource  Democracy Videos encouraging use of democratic rights</p>
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	<p>5.3.2 Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development</p>	<p>Officers:          Compulsory Professional Development          Learning and Development Programme          Apprenticeships          Emerging leaders Programme          Career progression scheme set up in ICT  <b>Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Group</b></p>
	<p>5.3.3 to encourage participation and development ensure that the following are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• officers career structures; and</li> <li>• an effective councillors development programme</li> </ul>	<p>Officers:          Continuous Professional Development          Learning and Development Programme          Apprenticeships          Emerging Leader’s programme          Career progression scheme set up in ICT.          Job Finder Scheme  <b>Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Group</b></p>

<b>Principle 6 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability</b>		
<b>Supporting Principles:</b>	<b>Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:</b>	<b>Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:</b>
<p>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</p>	<p>6.1.1 make clear to themselves, all officers and the community to whom they are accountable and for what</p>	<p>Constitution          Scrutiny Review          Scrutiny Work Programme          Scrutiny Annual Report          Scrutiny Handbook          Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework          Council Website – Meetings and Decision Making</p>

relationships	6.1.2 consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required	Health & Wellbeing Board Database of Stakeholders Primary Care Trusts Oxford University Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework Oxfordshire 2030: Sustainable Communities Strategy
	6.1.3 produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function	Council's Annual Report OCC Fire & Rescue Service Annual Report 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 <b>surveys and focus groups.</b>
	6.2.2 hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality.	Constitution Monitoring Officer's Annual Report Forward Plan for Cabinet includes decision which are not 'Key' decisions Delegated decisions taken in public Monitoring of exempt items by Monitoring Officer Group

	<p>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</p>	<p>Consultation Team Independent review of Consultation Arrangements completed 01/08</p> <p>Oxfordshire Consultation &amp; Involvement Strategy and Action Plan Consulting Diversity Guide; Consultation database of community groups. <b>Oxfordshire Voice Citizens Panel</b> MPs Monthly Briefings Locality Working Community-led Plans &amp; Actions The Equality <b>Framework</b> for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; SCIA process Equalities Monitoring for Consultations &amp; Involvement Activities</p>
	<p>6.2.4 establish a clear policy on the types of issues on which they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users, including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result</p>	<p>Oxfordshire Consultation &amp; Involvement Strategy <b>eConsult Portal</b></p>

	<p>6.2.5 publish an annual 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</p>	<p>Corporate Plan  Council's Annual Governance Statement  Statement of accounts  Oxfordshire County Council publishes a rolling four-year corporate plan on an annual basis, which sets out our vision and priorities; explains our planning framework and links with the Medium Term Financial Plan. We produce an annual report each year, which sets out our achievements and performance data including the results of satisfaction surveys. The report includes a summary of our accounts, which are also published in full.</p>
	<p>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</p>	<p>Constitution Strategy  Access to Information  Oxfordshire Consultation &amp; Involvement Strategy  Oxfordshire Insite  The Council's Website</p>



<p>6.3 making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to officers</p>	<p>6.3.1 develop and maintain a clear policy on how officers and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making</p>	<p>Organisation Development Strategy  Programme of staff research, including staff surveys and staff panel activities  Annual Staff conference  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.</p>
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