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Appendix B

Shropshire Council Local Code of Corporate Governance

INTRODUCTION

The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) defines governance as follows:

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

The International 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".

GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Shropshire Council is committed to achieving good corporate governance and this Local Code describes how the Council intends to achieve this in an open and explicit way. The local code is based upon the CIPFA SOLACE framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" (April 2016). As laid out in the guidance it "*is intended to assist authorities individually in reviewing and accounting for their own unique approach. The overall aim is to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities, that there is sound and inclusive decision making and that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities*". Consequently, the local Code has been written to reflect the Council's own structure, functions, and the governance arrangements in existence.

The local code is based on the following seven principles, the first two of which underpin the remaining five with the overall aim of "Achieving the intended outcomes while acting in the public interest at all times".

The principles are as follows:

Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

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 to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest in principles A and B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

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 strong public financial management.

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

Many of the requirements of the code are included in the Council's constitution and the Council's key strategies and policies.

Library folder - Shropshire Council Constitution — Shropshire Council

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Code of Corporate Governance is subject to annual review by Internal Audit and used to inform the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This review includes an assessment as to the effectiveness of the processes contained within the Code. This includes annual assessments such as:

- Annual review of the Constitution
- Annual reports of portfolio holders
- Annual reports of the Scrutiny Committees
- Head of Internal Audit Annual Report
- Audit Committee Annual Report
- Council Customer Feedback Report – Complaints, Compliments and Comments
- External Audit Annual Letter

The outcome of this review is reported in the Annual Governance Statement.

The following details how the Council meets the core principles and the systems, policies and procedures it has in place to support this.

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

Rational: Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to

Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below:

Behaving with integrity
- Code of Conduct for members to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained.
- The Monitoring Officer will review any breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.
- The Localism Act 2011 abolished the requirement for the Council to have a statutory Standards committee though the Council has retained a non-statutory committee that can meet if required. Both the Standards Committee and Standards Sub Committee have met in 2023/24.
- An Employee Code of Conduct sets down standards of behaviour and conduct the Council expects of its employees.
- Standard decision-making reporting format and access to drafts ensures that all those responsible for taking decisions have the necessary information on which to do so.
- An Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy supported by a Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy which includes a Fraud Response Plan and a Speaking Up About Wrongdoing Policy "Whistleblowing Policy". The strategy is supported by a Whistleblowing hotline for use by employees, stakeholders or the public to report irregularity and fraud. The Audit Committee receive an annual report of whistleblowing activity.
- Code of Conduct in relation to the acceptance of gifts and hospitality and all instances must be recorded. Advice and guidance provided to staff and members on the intranet.
- In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 Registers of Members' pecuniary interests are recorded and published on the Council's website.
- Members' declaration of interests, a standing item on all agendas. Minutes show declarations of interest were sought, and appropriate declarations made.
- Protocols for members on Council Representation on various outside bodies.
- A Corporate Feedback Policy that is published on the Council's website and is supported by a Complaints, Compliments and Suggestion on-line form.
- A Policy for raising a concern "Speaking Up About Wrong-Doing" (Incorporating the Whistleblowing Policy) is in place to protect individuals.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values
- A Constitution which sets out delegations of the executive, committees and senior officers, and the decision-making process to be applied. It also emphasises that the Council will act within the law.

respect the rule of law.	- Terms of Reference exist for all committees. - The Council have both Contract Procedure Rules defining the Council's process for all contracts and Financial Rules defining the safeguards and controls in place for managing public money and assets, these are reviewed on a regular basis. - The Council consults with stakeholders and other interested parties to seek feedback before developing key operational documents. - The Council has a clear, well publicised complaints procedure which requires complaints to be dealt with rigorously and promptly. Complaints are monitored by management and Cabinet, together with improvement actions arising from them. - Employee surveys are conducted and employees are consulted on workforce changes to identify actions for improvement. **Respecting the rule of law** - The Constitution identifies the Chief Legal Officer as the Council's Monitoring Officer and sets out the role of the Monitoring Officer. - An Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy supported by a Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy which includes a Fraud Response Plan and a Speaking Up About Wrongdoing Policy "Whistleblowing Policy". The strategy is supported by a Whistleblowing hotline for use by employees, stakeholders or the public to report irregularity and fraud. The Audit Committee receive an annual report of whistleblowing activity. - Officers in Legal and Democratic Services play a key role in ensuring that the principles enshrined in the Constitution, sustainable decision making, robust scrutiny, rules of natural justice, standards of conduct, efficiency, transparency, legality and high standards of corporate governance are delivered in practice through the Council's decision-making process. The Service provides advice and guidance on the interpretation of legal developments and has legal officers who are experts in specific areas of Council activities. - Where there have been instances of non-compliance with Contract Rules, and where the recognised approval process has been circumvented these have been identified and escalated to the top of the Council for action. - Where there have been breaches in Health and Safety Legislation these have been immediately actioned upon discovery. - All Committee reports require their authors to address the impact of the recommendations with respect to human rights and wider legislation.

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Rational: 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.	**Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below:** **Openness** • Adoption of a Publication Scheme that describes the kinds of information available and provides guidance about how to access personal information and submit a Freedom of Information request. • The Council has a small Information Governance team committed to ensuring the principles of Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Transparency are followed and all staff are required to undertake data protection training on an annual basis. • Adoption of a standard reporting format in relation to committee reports. The format includes a risk assessment and opportunities appraisal together with the financial implications attached to any recommendations, and appropriate background papers are cited to ensure full transparency. • Council and Cabinet meetings are webcast. Agendas, reports and minutes are published on the Council's website. Meetings are open to the public except in the case of exempt items. • Dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports are set and adhered to. • The Shropshire Plan and Financial Strategy set out the Council's mission and priorities, these have been revisited alongside delivery of a programme of transformation. • The Shropshire Compact has been effective in supporting the relationships between Shropshire Council, other public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector. It acts as an aid to problem solving by clearly setting out roles, responsibilities and commitments. **Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders** • The Council recognises the importance of communicating its vision and uses several channels to this effect. • The Council aims for a consistent approach to communication, reaching and targeting the key customers, stakeholders and partners in the most appropriate way. • The Council aims to improve engagement through consistent branding, so that our stakeholders know what we do and who to contact. This ensures compliance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity March 2011. This requires all Council publicity aimed at the public to be clearly and unambiguously identified as being produced by the Council. Material produced should make this evident. • Our website can help residents understand the Council's vision and purpose and how to access services on a day-to-day level.

- The Shropshire Newsroom hosts all the latest Council news stories with podcasts, videos and photographs available from the corporate Flickr account.
- The Council works with colleagues in the local, regional and national media to complement Shropshire Newsroom and ensure people have access to information about the Council.
- The Council uses relevant social media, as a method of disseminating our information and listening to feedback on issues as they arise.
- Customer Services are available virtually, digitally and through access points around the County supported by mobile hubs in the more remote areas. Customer Services are the main first point of contact enabling people to be more efficiently directed to the services they need.
- The Council uses the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Assembly weekly news bulletin to promote consultations, policy news, engagement opportunities and partnership working opportunities across the voluntary and community sector.
- The Council engages positively and sets out to work in a collaborative open partnership approach with several strategic partners including Central Government departments (Cities and Local Growth Unit, Homes and Communities Agency) and neighbouring local authorities. It is a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority; has a proactive Business Board which it services and engages with on key initiatives and policies, which in turn has informed the Local Economic Growth Strategy. The management of One Public Estate continues with other public sector partners. A multi-agency high-cost placement funding panel with Children's Services, Education Services and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is established to manage high-cost placements efficiently.

Engaging stakeholders effectively including individual citizens and service users.
- The Council seeks the views from individuals, organisations and businesses on several areas. All Council surveys are delivered online using the corporate approved consultation portal. Links to current consultations are published on the website. Some recent examples of consultations undertaken include Shrewsbury Moves, Active Travel Quarter, Taxi Fees, 2024/25 budget and Dog Fouling Public Space Protection Order, the full list of consultations undertaken is available on the Council website.
- Shropshire's Making It Real partnership was set up by Shropshire Council in response to the national 'Think Local Act Personal' initiative and Making it Real Framework. The aim of 'Making it Real' is for personalisation to be a reality for people who use adult social care services. This approach is driven through a series of 'I' statements outlining how adult social care should best meet people's needs; enabling people to live full and independent lives. The partnership works with the local authority to ensure this approach is adopted locally, through influencing and shaping adult social care services in Shropshire.

	- Local consultation continues for specific consultation and engagement activity for services and service areas. Locality commissioning activity involves engagement with communities and service user groups. These have helped to identify the needs and priorities of our citizens and make these our key areas for service delivery. Feedback from such events is used to develop strategic plans, priorities and targets. Widespread local consultation has taken place via service user and customer feedback surveys, public meetings and local partnerships to identify the needs and priorities of our citizens and make these our key areas for service delivery. - The Council has a regular update from the Chief Executive to keep individuals abreast of corporate initiatives and major events. Details are also included on the Shropshire Council website through the Newsroom. - The Council has a clear, well publicised complaints procedure which requires complaints to be dealt with rigorously and promptly. Complaints are monitored by management and Cabinet, together with improvement actions arising from them.
Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.	
Rationale: 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 organisation'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	**Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below:** **Defining Outcomes** - The Shropshire Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy set out the Council's vision and priorities together with its aims and actions. - Core strategic plans (such as the Economic Growth, Commercial, Commissioning, and Climate Change Strategies) set out specific aims in detail and compliment the overall Corporate Plan. - There is a clear reporting mechanism for performance information which is presented alongside the financial information for the corresponding period to the Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Areas of concern are identified and reported quarterly, and exceptions are monitored more frequently, e.g. monthly, providing greater detail and explanation of the issues and actions being taken. The reports are presented to senior managers and Cabinet. The underlying detailed dashboards are also available to Scrutiny members who can identify specific issues they may want to consider. Cabinet may ask Scrutiny to look at specific issues of on-going concern. Performance reporting against the Shropshire Plan is managed by the Business Improvement Team through Power BI dashboards. - The Council have established robust programme management function within the Office of the Chief Executive to oversee the transformation programme. **Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits** - The Council has; a Climate Change Strategy, highlighting its commitment to sustainable

institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.	environment; an Economic Growth Strategy which lays out its approach to sustainable development; a Commercial Strategy which lays out its approach to becoming a more commercially focused organisation embracing commercial culture in terms of how the Council acts to ensure the delivery of High Quality Services as efficiently and effectively as possible and a Social Value Charter, designed to assist commissioners and procurers to maximise opportunities to improve the social, economic and environment condition of our local area through effective commissioning and procurement. • Environmental Equality Impact Assessment considered in all reports which have a recommendation for a decision. • Resources are employed to assist commissioners and procurers to demonstrate the range and amount of social value generated or the financial value to society because of the added social value.

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

Rationale: Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). 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	**Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below:** **Determining interventions** • A standardised format of decision-making reports is used to ensure that all relevant information is considered such as analysis of options, resource implications, and outcomes of Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment, etc. Options are clearly defined and analysed to ensure decisions are based on the best possible information. • The Commissioning Strategy is applied to ensure clear alignment to need and improving outcomes. • An Annual Governance Statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer/Head of Paid Service includes an action plan identifying areas for improvement. **Planning interventions** • The Council sought opinions on future budget proposals. They set out what the issues were and invited the public to engage on them. As detailed earlier, there is a clear reporting mechanism for performance information which is presented alongside the financial information for the corresponding period and subject to scrutiny at all levels. • The Council's performance framework links directly to the Council's outcomes through the Shropshire Plan. Performance is reported quarterly to members through Cabinet, and in more detail to Scrutiny Committees. (

achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.	**Optimising achievement of intended outcomes** • The annual budget is prepared in line with agreed priorities. The Council publishes its Financial Strategy annually to set an indicative three-year financial plan to fit the longer-term strategic vision as well as a detailed one-year budget. This is intended to include realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure. • Resources are employed to assist commissioners and procurers to demonstrate the range and amount of social value generated or the financial value to society because of the added social value. • Risk management arrangements that are embedded across all service areas and help inform decision making.

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

Rationale: Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve 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	Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below: **Developing the entity's capacity** • There is a member induction programme in place, supporting and developing newly elected members. Development interventions are designed in the context of what individual members say they require during their one-to-one development reviews, and what their roles and responsibilities dictate they need. Member secretaries provide support, and the Member and Officer Protocol clearly stipulates officers' duties to provide professional and technical advice. The Local Member Protocol guides members and officers to behave in a way that promotes excellent communication. • A Workforce Strategy was adopted to ensure the Council has the right people with the right skills in the right place, at the right level and cost to enable the Council to meet its strategic objectives. • The Council actively promotes the use of Leap into Learning, an online learning and training platform that allows courses to be tailored to individual officers. This has been extensively used to deliver e learning to a wide variety of employees and to support more conventional training methods by providing a booking and attendance system. • The Council actively promotes the development of staff through work-based apprenticeship schemes. • A Strategic Transformation Partner (PwC) has been appointed to help deliver the approved spending reductions in 2024/25 and a sustainable position into the medium term.

guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.	**Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals** • Protocol on Member/Officer Relations that assists both members and officers achieve good working relationships in the conduct of Council business. • Scheme of Delegation that is reviewed annually considering legal and organisational changes. • Constitution that sets out financial management arrangements through the Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. • Member Development is managed via the Group Leaders and training is provided as needed. Members are updated on legal and policy changes etc. as required. • Induction programmes for all members and employees. • Training for employees is made available through Leap into Learning which provides all employees with access to online training courses that can be tailored to the individual, dependent upon role undertaken. • Staff are regularly appraised through the annual Personal Development Planning) PDP Process which includes the identification of training and development needs and drawing up of training action plans to address these. • In July 2023, 252 of the Council's most Senior Managers (including the Chief Executive, all Executive and Assistant Directors) completed a Leadership Development course across 19 cohorts each involving seven full day workshops, lasting eight months entitled Getting Leadership Right (GLR). This included the embedding of 'Getting it Right' principles and four Council values that underpin good governance. A second programme of GLR training was commenced during the summer of 2023, which was concluded in March 2024 with a further 89 council officers completing the course. The Shropshire Plan launched in October 2022, and the GLR programme was introduced to provide leaders with the tools, techniques and support they need to deliver it effectively. • Apprenticeship Programme offering training, skills and experience in local government. • Health and Safety policies designed to protect and enhance the welfare of staff are actively promoted and monitored. • A coaching connections network group has been established to build a pool of people who are skilled in facilitating personal development tools and to develop internal coaching capacity. This network provides group and individual personal development and coaching support to help people through change.

Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Rationale: 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 are 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	**Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below:** **Managing risk** • Risk management arrangements that are embedded across all service areas and help inform decision making. A new approach to service recovery planning was implemented in 2023. • Risk and Opportunity Management Framework that is subject to annual review and reported to the Audit Committee on an annual basis. • Responsibilities for managing individual risks are contained within the Opportunity Risk Management Strategy. • The Senior Management Team regularly reviews the strategic risk register and seeks assurances that it is kept up to date and actions to mitigate risks are implemented. • Operational risks are reviewed by risk owners on a regular basis. • Council strategic risks have been identified, aligned to the Annual Governance Action Plan and a member of the Senior Management Team assigned as the risk owner. Risk profile and actions plans have been put in place to ensure the risks are mitigated effectively and are reviewed monthly. • Business Continuity processes have continued to operate thorough the year to manage the risks caused by flooding. **Managing performance** • The Council has four overview and scrutiny committees which operate under clear terms of reference and rules of procedures laid down in the Constitution. Scrutiny Committee chairs and members have clearly laid down accountabilities in the Constitution. Members may not participate in the scrutiny of decisions they were involved in. • The Council is part of a long standing and effective Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Telford and Wrekin Council. This reflects the reality that most substantial changes to services covered by the statutory duties for Health Scrutiny affect services across both local authority areas and as such would need to be looked at jointly, in line with regulatory direction. • There is a standardised format for all committee reports which includes background to the report, any recommendations that decisions need to be made upon together with reasons behind those recommendations. A SharePoint site facilitates approval of draft reports prior to Cabinet by key officers.

policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability.

It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are 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 service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

- Reports, minutes and decisions under member consideration are published on the website and are available in hard copy in a variety of formats on request.
- Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations set out the Council's arrangements and ensure that processes continue to operate consistently.
- An effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained as evidenced by an External Quality Assurance review 2021/22. Internal Audit prepares and delivers a risk-based audit plan in line with Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards which is kept under review to reflect changing priorities and emerging risks.
- The Council continues to benchmark some services to assist in identifying areas for review and to ensure that as many performance indicators as possible are performing to the standards that the Council sets. This includes the use of peer reviews to ensure efficiency of operations and learning from External statutory reviews, i.e. Ofsted, Local Government Association Finance and Overview and Scrutiny reviews.
- Most financial decisions are reported through to Cabinet, Council and Scrutiny Committee in an appropriate and transparent basis and challenge welcomed from members and officers. All budgets, actuals and variances are reported regularly with supporting information trails. The Financial Strategy identifies a short-term budget plan and a long-term aspirational plan aligned to the outcomes identified in The Shropshire Plan. A full risk assessment is undertaken in support of this. Final Accounts are produced on time and in-line with statutory deadlines and best practice.
- A new approach to budget monitoring and reporting has been introduced.
- The Corporate Performance Management Framework including new Service planning and PDP process was developed and implemented in early 2023, and reporting takes place each quarter via the online dashboard.

Robust internal control
- Strengthened governance has been achieved with the appointment of an Assistant Director for Finance and Technology (Deputy s151 Officer), Head of Technology and Automation, and a Head of Policy and Governance (Chief Audit Executive) as part of the Legal and Governance Team with a focus on continuous improvement by aligning performance, personnel data and approaches.
- There is an effective apolitical Audit Committee with clear terms of reference which are reviewed annually and based on the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Guidance.
- The Audit Committee, which is independent of Cabinet, oversees the management of governance issues, risk management framework, internal control environment, financial

reporting and Treasury Management. Its performance is subject to annual self-assessment.
- An independent Audit Committee member was appointed in early 2023.
- There is a formally agreed Audit Committee work plan and training schedule.
- An annual report is produced by Internal Audit which provides an opinion on the Council's control environment, and a self-assessment of its arrangements against the public sector internal audit standards and CIPFA's guide to the role of the Head of Internal Audit.
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy which is subject to annual review and is approved by the Audit Committee.
- Quarterly fraud reports to the Audit Committee summarise anti-fraud activity in the year.
- An Annual Governance Statement (AGS) that is subject to review by the Audit Committee.
- Training is provided to Audit Committee members on areas relevant to their role.
- There are frameworks in place in relation to child and adult safeguarding.

Managing data

- The Council has a small Information Governance team committed to ensuring the principles of Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Transparency are followed.
- Information Governance Leadership and Oversight Group (IGLOO) and the Information Governance and Information Security Group (ISG) provide a clear process for the consideration and escalation of information governance and security risks. The groups have been in operation since January 2022, attendance is from across the Council and terms of reference have been refreshed during 2023/24. IGLOO focusses on decisions, compliance and oversight and improvements have been evidenced in response to ICT security and infrastructure concerns.
- Where staff do not complete the mandatory Cyber security and Data Protection training their IT access is restricted until complete.
- Information governance and security awareness including individual responsibilities and good practice is raised and embedded with officers and elected members through the mandatory information governance and cybersecurity training. This is reinforced via targeted communications and more recently phishing simulations.
- In April 2023 the Council received an enforcement notice from the ICO in relation to FOI response times. Action is being taken to improve information governance arrangements and legislative compliance rates. The Council has responded positively and in November 2023 the Council was found to have fully complied with the requirements of notice which was confirmed by the ICO.
- The Council's Information Security Policy provides guidance on the arrangements that must be in place to ensure personal data is kept protected and secure. This was fully reviewed and

updated throughout 2023.
- Effective information sharing is undertaken in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- Data Subjects are informed why their personal information is being collected and how it will be processed (including when shared with other bodies) through the Council's overall Privacy Notices published on our website and individual Privacy Statements on forms, in booklets etc.
- A formal Data Sharing Framework Protocol between Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Partnership in respect of jointly delivered health services.

Strong public financial management
- An audited and signed Statement of Accounts is published on an annual basis containing:
  - A statement of responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts.
  - A statement of the Council's accounting policies.
- An Annual Governance Statement signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer/Head of Paid Service.
- Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (CIPFA, 2015), is reviewed annually.
- Financial procedures are documented in the Financial Regulations.
- Financial Strategy in place.
- The financial position is reported quarterly to Cabinet.
- A new Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 has been documented and approved.
- Most financial decisions are reported through to Cabinet, Council and Scrutiny Committee in an appropriate and transparent basis and challenge welcomed from members and officers. All budgets, actuals and variances are reported regularly with supporting information trails. The Financial Strategy identifies a short-term budget plan and a long-term aspirational plan aligned to the outcomes identified in The Shropshire Plan. A full risk assessment is undertaken in support of this. Final Accounts are produced on time and in-line with statutory deadlines and best practice.
- A new approach to budget monitoring and reporting has been introduced.

Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.	
Rationale: Accountability is about ensuring that those	**Shropshire Council's commitment to achieving good governance is demonstrated below:** **Implementing good practice in transparency**

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.	• Agendas, reports and minutes are published on the Council's website. • Adoption of a style guide document that outlines how to communicate more effectively and to ensure communications are consistent and clear. • Adoption of and implementation against the National Transparency Code. • The Cabinet is the Council's key decision-making body and makes decisions within the policy framework approved by Full Council. It is made up of the Leader, who is elected by the Council, and up to nine members. When key decisions are to be discussed or made, these are published in the Cabinet forward plan in so far as they can be anticipated. If these key decisions are to be discussed with Council officers at a meeting of the Cabinet, this will be open for the public to attend except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed. The Cabinet must make decisions which are in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to decide which is outside the budget or policy framework, this must be referred to the Council to decide. **Implementing good practices in reporting** • Annual Financial Statements are compiled, published to timetable and included on the Council's website. • The Corporate Performance Management Framework including new Service planning and PDP process was developed and implemented in early 2023, and reporting takes place each quarter via the online dashboard. • An annual report from each of the scrutiny committees is presented to Council alongside reports from the portfolio holders; the scrutiny reports detail the past work of the Committees, the present work and future. • Completion of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). • A Business Plan and Financial Strategy setting out the Council's mission and priorities. **Assurance and effective accountability** • The AGS sets out the Council's governance framework and the results of the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements. The AGS includes areas for improvement. • An effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained. The Service has direct access to members and provides assurance on governance arrangements via an annual report containing an opinion on the Council's internal control arrangements. • External Audit provides an annual opinion on the Council's financial statements and arrangements for securing Value for money. • The Council actively welcomes peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies. • The Shropshire Compact is a set of shared principles and guidelines for effective partnership

	working between Shropshire's public sector bodies and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). It acts as guidance to ensure shared understanding of responsibilities and obligations and works towards best practice in partnership.

Appendix B – Shropshire Council's Corporate Governance Framework

'The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector' defines 'governance' as comprising 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 them must always try to achieve the Council's objectives while acting in the public interest.

Core Principles	(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 Council'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
Evidence of Good Governance	Members and Employees Codes of Conduct	FOI Publication Scheme	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Councillors and Decision Making	Member Induction Programme Members Protocol	Opportunity Risk Management Strategy. Service recovery planning arrangements	Committee Framework
	Councillors and Decision Making	Information Governance	Shropshire Plan	Commissioning Strategy	Workforce Strategy	Strategic and Operational Risk Registers	Forward Plan
	Members / Officers Register of Interests / Register of Gifts and Hospitality	Councillors and Decision Making	Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan	Member and staff development	Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan	Annual Statement of Accounts
	Members Protocol Members Role and Expectations	Public Meetings and Decisions Recorded	Workforce Strategy	Budget Consultation	Leap into Learning	Emergency / Business Continuity Management	Annual Governance Statement and Action Plan
	Customer feedback / Complaints Policy	Shropshire Plan	Procurement Strategy	Transformation and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Apprenticeship Scheme	Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Shropshire Plan
	Whistleblowing Policy and hotline	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Public Sector Social Value Act 2012	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Strategic Transformation Partner	Councillors and Decision Making	Medium Term Financial Strategy http://shropshire.gov.uk/access-to-information/
	The Constitution	Shropshire Compact	Commissioning Strategy	Social Value	Members Protocol Members Role and Expectations	Financial Procedure Rules Contract Procedure Rules	Internal Audit QAIP CAE Year end Opinion
	Financial Procedure Rules Contract Procedure Rules	Customer Services	Climate Strategy and Action Plan	Opportunity Risk Management Strategy	Scheme of Delegation	Internal Audit QAIP	External audit of accounts and Value for money opinion
	Consultations	Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly	Economic Growth Strategy	Shropshire Plan	The Constitution	Internally led reviews Peer reviews Benchmarking	Peer reviews - Finance - Scrutiny Ofsted Childrens Services and SEND inspections
	Statutory Officers Roles: Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer, Monitoring Officer, Head of Paid Service. HR policies.	Public Consultations	Commercial Strategy		Staff PDP Process	2024/25 Budget	Shropshire Compact

'The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector' defines 'governance' as comprising 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 them must always try to achieve the Council's objectives while acting in the public interest.							
Core Principles	(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 Council'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
	Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy and Strategy Annual Whistleblowing Policy	Social Value	Programme Management arrangements by Office of the Chief Executive (OCE)		Getting Leadership Right Leadership Development Training Programme	Audit Committee Audit Committee Terms of Reference CAE Year end Opinion Independent Audit Committee Member Annual Audit Committee Work Plan and Training	
		Newsroom	Social Value		Health and safety policies	Counter Fraud, Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy and Strategy	
		Customer feedback / Complaints Policy	Councillors and Decision Making			Information Governance Information Security Policy ICO Compliance	
		Corporate performance, financial and risk reporting framework				Annual Statement of Accounts	
						Medium Term Financial Strategy Treasury Management Strategy	