



# Code of Corporate Governance 2024/25



North Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

# Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – 2024/25

This document details how North Ayrshire Council complies with the [Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework](#) (CIPFA/Solace, 2016).

The Framework supports local government to take responsibility for developing and shaping an informed approach to governance, aimed at achieving the highest standards in a measured and proportionate way. It assists authorities individually in reviewing and accounting for their own unique approach. The overall aims ensure:

- Resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities.
- There is sound and inclusive decision making.
- There is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for our service users and communities.

The Framework applies to annual governance statements prepared for the financial year 2016/17 onwards.

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

### Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

- New Elected Members are provided with a full Induction Programme which includes all aspects of conduct. There is an extensive programme of inductions at the outset of the new Council Administration. Thereafter, sessions are provided on a regular basis.
- All Elected Members have access to Continuing Professional Development discussions and the opportunity to participate in self/360 assessments to review and support their ongoing development. In addition to this, a series of development events are provided to further support Elected Members' Development. A calendar of events on a variety of topics is arranged and promoted to Elected Members. Online guides and e-learning are also available.
- All employees including Chief Officers participate in 'Our Time to Talk' personal performance discussions which provide the opportunity to discuss the focus of work, how this will be done (behaviours linked to our Staff Values) and what development is required to support this. This is an annual discussion which can be supported throughout the year by 121/supervision discussions and a mid-year review as required.
- The Council invests in leadership and management development by hosting a Leadership Academy. This provides aspiring, first, middle and strategic leaders, including Chief Officers and Elected Members, with a variety of development interventions which enhance, refresh and develop their skills, knowledge and behaviour.
- There is a [Code of Conduct for employees](#).
- [The Code of Conduct for Councillors](#) sets out the minimum standards of conduct that are expected from Elected Members and provides advice and guidance on registerable interests and on the declaration of interests. The Code also sets out the sanctions that can be applied by the Standards Commission where a breach of the Code occurs. Elected Members are provided with quarterly updates from the Standards Commission.
- The Local Government Act 2000 and the Code of Conduct for Councillors set out the categories of interests, financial or otherwise, that Councillors of Scottish Local Authorities must register. This register is available for inspection by members of the public. In compliance with the Act and relevant Regulations, the 33 Elected Members of North Ayrshire Council have registered interests with the Proper Officer of the Council. The Register of Interests and notifications of Declarations of Interest are available for inspection. Reports on Elected Member Training are submitted to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and on an annual basis to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Council has approved Guidelines for Member-Officer Relations (incorporating the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations from the Councillors' Code of Conduct). This is subject to annual review as part of the Council's review of governance documents.
- Declaration of Interest is a set item on all Committee Meeting Agendas. This is to be completed by all Elected Members, informing of any issues in which they may benefit.
- There is a Whistle Blowing policy in place for employees, this was reviewed in 2020 and again in 2022 in line with accessibility requirements.
- A Media Protocol is in Place.

- The People Strategy, “Our People Connect”, was designed by our employees for our employees. This outlines priorities that will engage and support the transformation of the Council to be a leaner, more efficient and higher performing organisation where people can develop and thrive.
- Our Staff Values of Focus, Passion and Inspiration are key to our People Strategy “Our People Connect”. They are now fully embedded in everything we do each day and visible when logging onto a laptop or desktop, poster or wall displays, lanyards etc. In addition to this they are embedded in our recruitment process and throughout our development interventions (such as courses and “Our Time To Talk” personal development review discussions).

## Respecting the rule of law

- Strategic decision-making is governed by the Council’s key constitutional documents which are subject to regular review. The governance documents were approved by Council in May 2022 and reviewed in May 2023 and are scheduled for review in May/June 2024. The key documents are the Scheme of Administration, The Standing Orders for Meetings and Proceedings of the Council, the Standing Orders relating to Contracts and Contract Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.
- The Council’s Cabinet is the key strategic decision-making committee, comprising the Leader of the Council, the Depute Leader and four Members of the Administration.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Council’s Audit and Scrutiny and Appeals Committees are set out in the approved Scheme of Administration.
- The Head of Service (Finance) is appointed as the Section 95 Officer who is responsible to the authority for the proper administration of financial affairs as stated within the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
- The Head of Service (Democratic Services) is appointed as the Monitoring Officer.
- The Head of Service (Democratic Services) is appointed as RIPSA Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The SRO ensures compliance with the terms of The Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 (RIPSA) and associated legislation.
- The Chief Social Work Officer is appointed in accordance with Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.
- The Council has appointed a Chief Planning Officer.
- The Head of Service (Education) is appointed as Chief Education Officer in anticipation of the commencement of Section 25 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.
- The Revised Remuneration Policy Guidance is in place.
- The Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy is in place.
- A Data Protection Officer (DPO) is appointed. The DPO ensures compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and the Data Protection Act (2018) legislation.

## B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

### Openness

- [Our Council Plan 2023-28](#) was approved by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 and sets out our strategic approach to making North Ayrshire a fairer and more equal society. This sets out our vision, mission and four priorities up to 2028.
- We have 26 Council Plan Performance Indicators to ensure that progress on the Council Plan is managed and scrutinised. Targets have been set where appropriate for each of the indicators to ensure we can monitor progress of our priorities. Progress on the Council Plan is also scrutinised through the half yearly Council Plan Progress Reports sent to the ELT, Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. These are published on the performance pages of our [website](#). In addition, summary reports are scrutinised by the ELT at Quarter 1 and Quarter 3.
- Council Plan actions are high-level five-year actions as listed within the Council Plan 2023-28 and are supported by relevant strategies.
- The Council's Annual Performance Report provides a summary of our performance during the year and is available on our [website](#).
- Financial information including annual accounts is published on our website.
- Our Annual Governance Statement is approved annually by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and published on our website.
- Our Performance Management Strategy 2023-28 aligns to our Council Plan and is published on our website. It outlines current procedures and planned activities to drive continuous improvement for the people of North Ayrshire.
- Our Children's Services Planning includes our Children's Rights Report and our Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-26. Our Children's Services Plan outlines our aims and priorities to safeguard, support and promote the well-being of children and to make North Ayrshire the best place in Scotland to grow up. Our Children's Rights Report emphasises our commitment to promote and protect children and young people's rights in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Our Child Poverty Action Plan takes account of the actions we are taking with partners to address child poverty in North Ayrshire. Progress is reported to the Children's Services Strategic Partnership (CSSP), Integrated Joint Board and North Ayrshire Council Cabinet.
- Links to [My Local Council website](#) are published which provide our residents with Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) performance information and comparisons to other local authorities. Information on our performance within the LGBF is included within our suite of public performance reporting, in particular within our annual LGBF report published as part of the Council Plan Year-End Progress Reporting.
- There is a presumption that all committee business is open to the public except where required by law to be in private. Council/Committee meetings which are open to the public are also live streamed to the internet and/or available to view as a recording following the meeting. Owing to the pandemic, Committee meetings resumed on a remote basis from June 2020 and since then both Council and Committee meetings have been streamed live with recordings available for viewing thereafter. The Council meeting in September 2022 agreed that "hybrid meetings" should be the default position for meetings whereby some Members attend the meeting in person and others may join remotely. This improves accessibility and participation. A hybrid meetings protocol is in place.

- Through our commitment to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the Council's [Community Planning website](#) has been developed to share information and research about the work of the Community Planning Partnership, Locality Planning, our key aims and objectives and align with the requirements of the Act.
- The Council has separate schemes for reporting complaints, compliments and customer feedback.
- Two complaint reports are submitted to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee each year and trends or issues fed back to services to identify improvements. Complaint handling performance is also recorded regularly in Pentana. The Council has a dedicated Complaints Manager who supports Chief Officers, Senior Managers, Elected Members, complaint handlers and acts as liaison with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
- All inspection reports are reviewed by Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Council's Publication Scheme and guidance on submitting Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests are available on the Council's website.
- Guidance on submitting Subject Access Requests is available on the Council's website.
- Open Data is published on the Council's Open Data Portal, allowing members of the public to access information on various council services ranging from information such as location of libraries to performance related matters such as contact centre call performance.
- Elected Members have access to data on Pentana on request allowing them to view progress of the Council Plan indicators.

## Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

- The Council is committed to engaging in a meaningful way with its communities so that it can understand and respond effectively to local needs and it is committed to the principles of the National Standards on Community Engagement.
- The Community Planning Partnership works closely with the Consultation Institute. Accredited training on best practice in community engagement and consultation has been given to a range of Council and partner employees.
- The Council is committed to supporting the establishment and work of Community Councils and their role in Locality Partnerships as well as supporting Locality Planning in its own right as the Council's scheme of decentralisation.
- The Community Planning Partnership website contains The Engagement Hub and a consultation calendar which brings all partner consultations together in a searchable format and gives feedback on consultations.
- The Community Engagement Network of the Community Planning Partnership has been refocused and aims to ensure partners meet the revised National Standards for Community Engagement.
- The North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board (IJB) is the governing body of the North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership. It has delegated responsibilities from North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

## Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

- The Community Planning Partnership's People's Panel is issued to obtain the public's views on a range of issues. The People's Panel is a sample of 1,000 people living in more deprived areas and 1,000 residents in less deprived areas. This survey is carried out every two years to obtain views on the Community Planning Partnership's three key priorities, in addition to surveys on particular issues. Engagement and consultation is at the heart of the Community Planning Partnership and is driven through the Engagement Centre of Excellence Programme which includes training, digital resources, and links to key strategies and approaches. For example, the Youth Participation and Citizenship Strategy, Older People's Forum and Community Engagement Network are all key examples of this work. There is now an online 'Engagement Hub' on the Community Planning website, comprising of an online engagement list, events calendar, community and partner resources and information about the CPP's Participation Approach.
- The Council routinely engages with our residents on our services. This is also achieved through a range of groups such as Parent Councils, Tenants Associations, Ayrshire Ethnic Minority Community Association and the Access Panel.
- The establishment of Locality Partnerships has made Community Planning more accessible to local people.
- Increased use of social media through Locality Facebook pages, the Community Planning Partnership Twitter account and partner use of Community Planning hashtag supports communication with a wider audience.
- Participatory Budgeting is an approach to deepening engagement with residents which delivers real influence for individuals and communities and the Council has made significant commitment and investment in this work.
- The North Ayrshire Community and Locality Planning Model extends and deepens engagement with individuals and participation by communities by: co-defining the issues; co-producing the responses; and co-delivering the solutions.
- We currently use the Consul application to run Shaping North Ayrshire, our online participation forum allowing residents the opportunity to provide us with feedback on current topics.
- Application of the Place Standard allows individuals and communities to express how it feels to live in local communities and to shape the development of community and spatial planning in their area.
- Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out by Customer Services on a regular basis to measure satisfaction levels and receive comments in relation to the service provided. A report is produced and analysed by our Complaints Manager in conjunction with our Senior Manager (Customer Services) and is used to form an improvement action plan.

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

### Defining outcomes

- The Council's vision and mission outlined in [Our Council Plan 2023-28](#) links strongly to the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership's (CPP's) shared vision of 'North Ayrshire – A Better Life'.
- Our Council Plan 2023-28 was approved by Council in June 2023. Our vision and mission in Our Council Plan are:
  - Vision: 'A North Ayrshire that is fair for all'
  - Mission: 'Working together to improve the lives of our people in North Ayrshire'
- Our Council Plan has four interlinked and interdependent priorities:
  - Wellbeing – to transition to a wellbeing economy, delivering prosperity, wellbeing and resilience for local people.
  - Communities and Local Democracy – We will have active, inclusive and resilient communities.
  - Climate Change – To achieve net zero by 2030.
  - A Sustainable Council – A community Wealth Building Council that is efficient and accessible, maximising investment and focusing resources towards our priorities.
- The role of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and ELT/ Chief Officers Leadership Team is to scrutinise the findings from the various performance reports. We regularly report on the following to ensure effective scrutiny:
  - Locality Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Progress Reports.
  - Locality Partnership progress reports.
  - Council Plan Progress Reports - six monthly reports to Cabinet and the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
  - Council Plan Annual Performance Report.
  - Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
- As part of the recent self-evaluation work undertaken by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, a standing agenda item to cover areas which the Committee would like to have addressed has been added to the committee agendas.
- We utilise the Pentana online performance management system to track and manage Council priorities and measures.
- The Council Plan Performance Management Framework (PIs) is reviewed regularly. The Council Plan actions are as published within the Council Plan 2023-28 and are high level actions over five years. They are supported by strategies within the Council.
- Operational Plans are reviewed on an annual basis.
- Strategic risks and control factors are reported to Cabinet.



## Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- The Community Wealth Building Strategy has been refreshed for 2024-27 and is available on our [website](#). Community Wealth Building is central to our Council Plan 2023-28.
- Our Local Outcomes Improvement Plan's clear focus has been agreed by Community Planning partners across themes of Wellbeing, Work and World with an overarching focus on reducing inequalities and working in partnership.
- The Sustainable North Ayrshire Strategy 2024-27 is established.
- The Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-31 is in place.
- The Climate Change Steering Group established, comprising senior management representatives from each Council Directorate, Community Planning Partners, private sector and other agencies, with meetings taking place every four months.
- The Annual Climate Change Reporting Duty is submitted to Scottish Government.
- Our Council Plan includes performance indicators in relation to carbon emissions and amount of energy generated from low carbon sources.
- Our Committee report template includes requirement for evaluation of climate change impacts to ensure sustainability impacts are embedded within our decision-making processes.
- The Council is committed to using the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Performance Indicators to scrutinise performance on our priorities against all local authorities within Scotland.
- The Housing and Public Protection Service complies with the Scottish Regulators Strategic Code of Practice. The integrated regulatory functions within the service (Building Standards, Environmental Health and Trading Standards) can demonstrate an effective contribution towards the Council's approach to sustainable economic growth as well as maintaining and promoting a prosperous, fair and safe society.

## D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

### Determining interventions

- The information submitted to Committees is discussed in detail at ELT to ensure management oversight and thereafter at pre-Agenda meetings (except in the case of regulatory committees) that are held one week prior to the formal meetings. This enables any additional information to be sought to allow a fully informed decision to be taken at the Committee.
- Each report should indicate the justification for each action proposed and consultations undertaken in its development, together with feedback from consultees. Reports also contain separate sections on a range of implications (financial, socio-economic duty, human resources, legal, equality, children and young people, sustainability, Community Wealth Building, the Council's key priorities and Community Benefit). Guidance for Report Authors provides information on the completion of these elements within these required fields in a committee report.

## Planning interventions

- Council Plan six monthly progress reports.
- Operational Plan reports to Heads of Service and Executive Directors.
- Use of Pentana online performance management system allows us to ensure we are achieving acceptable levels of performance, identify opportunities for continuous improvement and ensure we have plans in place to improve underperforming areas.
- Council and Operational Plan performance reports contain trend information on Performance Indicators.
- Strategic risks and control factors are reported to Cabinet.
- Risk Management Strategy is in place and available on our website.
- The Community Planning Partnership Risk Register has been reviewed to reflect the refreshed Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2022-30.
- The Workforce Strategy, 'our approach to workforce planning', sets out how our workforce will support the delivery of the Council's ambitions within the available financial resources and builds on the workforce planning approach carried out at a service level.
- 'A Workforce for the Future' HR guide sets out our Workforce Planning approach and is published on our intranet to support managers and Heads of Service in shaping their current and future workforce to ensure delivery of efficient and effective services and is a significant factor in how we transform our Council to deliver our financial challenges. In order to be successful, it is key for workforce planning to flow from the Council Plan and link to both people management and operational processes.
- Long Term Financial Outlook – The Council's Long-Term Financial Outlook outlines the financial challenges facing the Council over the next 10 years and is reported to Cabinet.
- Medium Term Financial Plan – The Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan provides an overview of the Council's anticipated financial position for the next three financial years. This is approved by Council annually. A copy of the budget book is published on our website each year.
- Capital Investment Programme – The Council's Capital Investment programme provides an overview of the capital projects the Council is investing in over the 10-year period and associated funding sources. The 10-year Capital Investment Programme is reviewed and approved by Council annually. (A review of the 10-year General Services Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2030/31 was presented to Council on 1 March 2023.)
- Capital Investment Strategy – The Council's Capital Investment Strategy provides an overview of how capital investment plans, financing and treasury management activity contribute to the infrastructure and provision of services for the benefit of North Ayrshire communities and citizens. (The refreshed Capital Investment Strategy 2023 – 2031 was approved by Council on 1 March 2023. Our Capital Investment Programme can be found on our [website](#))
- Asset Management Plans are in place.

## Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

- Regular reporting of financial performance to Cabinet.
- Production of annual accounts and publication on our [website](#).
- Local Financial Returns.

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

### Developing the entity's capacity

- The Leadership Academy provides skills, knowledge and behavioural development for leaders at all levels. Managers regardless of grade can, if committed to their continuous learning and supported by their manager, progress through the levels of the Leadership Academy from First to Strategic utilising development opportunities and accessing tailored interventions for career progression. This provides an opportunity to build leadership capacity and grow our own talent.
- The Connected Leadership Network is an active Teams channel which provides an opportunity for senior managers to gain support from others as well as sharing knowledge, ideas and suggestions. This has been a successful addition to the Leadership Academy and supports the digital agenda.
- The Chief Executive hosts a Connected Leadership Conference three times per year. This provides an opportunity for sharing of information and increased engagement and collaboration opportunities with managers from across the Council.

### Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

- Each employee has a Role Profile which provides information on the expectations of the job. This supports the development of skills, knowledge and behaviours of our employees.
- All governance documents including the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Financial Regulations documents are reviewed annually and published on our website.
- All employees throughout the Council participate in "Our Time To Talk" performance review meetings which provide the opportunity to discuss the focus of work. It ensures managers and employees take time, at least once per year, to reflect and most importantly 'TALK' about how the employee is getting on at work. This is an annual discussion which can be supported throughout the year by 121/supervision discussions and a mid-year review as required.
- New Elected Members are provided with a full Induction programme which includes all aspects of Council business, such as overview of Council meetings, introduction to the ELT and the role of the councillor.
- A series of development events are provided to further support Elected Members Development. A calendar of events on a variety of topics is arranged and promoted to Elected Members, in addition to online guides and e-learning.

- Elected Members are invited to participate in an annual development discussion in addition to an opportunity to participate in self/360 assessment. This allows identification of development activity to support their role and provides feedback on their individual performance utilising the 360 tool.
- The Community Planning Partnership's Learning and Development Plan contains leadership development.

## F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

### Managing risk

- The Strategic Risk Register refreshed annually and approved by Cabinet, and subject to a six-month progress update. A Corporate Risk Register is refreshed annually and approved by the ELT and also subject to a six-month progress update. Operational Risk Registers are updated by services six-monthly. There are escalation and de-escalation processes in place between the registers.
- The Corporate Risk Management Group, with senior representation from all Directorates, meets six-monthly to review and update risks and their associated risk management action plans. Other related business will also be considered where this could enhance the organisational risk posture.
- The Community Planning Partnership Risk Register was revised in 2022 to tie in with Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2022-30.

### Managing performance

- Council Plan Progress Reports are scrutinised by the ELT, Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The reports are produced in a 'magazine style' format to make the information as engaging and accessible as possible.
- Performance indicators (including targets where appropriate) and actions are included within the Council Plan Performance Framework and Council Plan. All updates to the framework are detailed within the six-monthly Progress Reports and reported to ELT, Cabinet and Audit and Scrutiny for full transparency.
- The six-monthly Council Plan Progress Reports focus on outcomes as well as ongoing activity and outputs. Case studies are included. Information on audits, inspections and accreditations is included to show how we performing. Benchmarking activity takes place via the LGBF indicators included in the Performance Management Framework and the annual LGBF report. This ensures we learn from others and continually improve. Links are provided to additional information where appropriate. This holistic approach provides a well-rounded view of performance within our Council that includes valuable context.
- The six-monthly Council Plan Progress Reports (Quarters 2 and 4) as well as the Annual Performance Report and update on Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) performance are published on our website. Scrutiny is invited from residents and contact information is contained in the reports.
- Operational Plans within services align directly to the Council Plan and are scrutinised by relevant Senior Managers and Heads of Service.

- Benchmarking activity is undertaken based on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) as well as through specific groups. In addition to quantitative comparisons, outcome-based benchmarking also takes place.
- Our Performance Management Strategy 2023-28 is published on our [website](#) and aligns to Our Council Plan 2023-28.

## Robust internal control

- The Council has a framework of Internal Controls embedded within services, underpinned by Financial Regulations and Codes of Financial Practice which are approved by the Council.
- Internal Audit establishes an annual risk-based plan of work to review controls across the Council. This is approved by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and is subject to a mid-year review process.
- All audit findings are reported to the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Council has a Corporate Fraud Team which investigates all allegations of fraud and error against the Council. Six-monthly update reports are provided to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Regular review of the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy is undertaken, with the most recent review taking place in September 2022.
- An annual report and assurance statement is provided by the Chief Internal Auditor to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- An annual report on RIPSAs is provided to ELT and Cabinet and we provide an annual statistical return on use of investigatory powers to Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO).

## Managing data

- The Council's Records Management Plan (RMP) was approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland in 2015 and a successful interim assessment conducted in 2018, with the outcome report published on the Council website. A further successful interim assessment has been conducted in 2022/23 and the outcome will be uploaded to the Council website once released by the National Records for Scotland.
- The Council maintains an Information Asset Register (IAR) which is kept under regular review.
- The Council has a process for undertaking Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) with approval required from DPO and annual reviews embedded to ensure compliance with Article 35 of the UK GDPR.

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

### Implementing good practice in transparency

- We publish our public facing reports on our website.
- Committee Reports and webcasting is on our website.
- There is a presumption that all committee business is open to public except where required by law to be in private.
- We publish open datasets.

### Implementing good practices in reporting

- Annual Governance Statement.
- Six monthly Council Plan Progress reports and Annual Performance Reports produced, with updates to accompanying Performance Management Framework reported in detail to the ELT, Cabinet and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- Community Planning Partnership Annual Performance Report.
- Health and Social Care Partnership Annual Performance Report.
- Annual Accounts demonstrates best practice according to external auditors.

### Assurance and effective accountability

- The Annual Governance Statement is approved by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee prior to inclusion within the annual accounts.
- Any recommendations by External Audit are reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and progress with implementation is monitored by Internal Audit and also report to the Committee on a bi-annual basis.
- Internal Audit work is reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.
- The Council's Internal Audit Team received an independent External Quality Assessment in July 2022 which demonstrates conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. This needs to be carried out at least every five years, with period self-assessments also carried out by the Chief Internal Auditor.
- The Chief Auditor has rights of access to the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in relation to any audit matter.
- The Data Protection Officer has rights of access to the Chief Executive and the highest management in relation to any personal/sensitive data protection matters.