



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STOCKPORT'S CODE OF GOVERNANCE 2015/16

CONTENTS

	Page
1. What is Corporate Governance?	3
2. The Role of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	3
3. The Governance Framework	4
4. The six core Principles of Good Governance	4
5. Demonstrating Compliance with the Core and Supporting Principles	5
6. Responsibilities	7
7. Reporting	7
8. Communication and training	7
APPENDIX 1 – Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council – Delivering Sound Governance – narrative	8
APPENDIX 2 – Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council – Delivering Sound Governance – summary	24

1. What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate Governance is the term used to describe how the Council manages its affairs and its relationship with the Community of Stockport. Corporate Governance is the way in which the Council ensures the delivery of high quality services to all taxpayers, citizens, stakeholders and partners. It 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.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers (SOLACE) 2007 revised framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government says:

Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes for citizens and service users. Good governance enables a council to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk. All local authorities should aim to meet the standards of the best and governance arrangements should not only be sound but also be seen to be sound.

2. The Role of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, as a public organisation, is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of governance in order to fulfil its priorities. The Council wishes to provide strong and accountable civic leadership to encourage those working for a better Stockport to play their part in delivering this future. Executive Councillors in particular will take leading roles in advocating for progress towards the following outcomes, working with local people, businesses and partners to ensure:

- **People are able to make informed choices and look after themselves**
- **People who need support get it**
- **Communities in Stockport are safe and resilient**
- **Stockport benefits from a thriving economy**
- **Stockport is a place people want to live**

Many thousands of people benefit from the services provided by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Over 284,000 people live in the Borough and many more look to Stockport for employment or entertainment. The Council is the largest employer with the Borough and is responsible for ensuring that public funds are spent appropriately.

The role that the Council plays is vitally important to all taxpayers and citizens. The Council has a key role in leading our communities as well as ensuring the delivery of high quality services to the public. The Council recognises that good governance enables the Council to pursue its clear vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk.

It is crucial that the public can have confidence in elected councillors and appointed officers in carrying out their functions. The Council recognises that good governance strengthens credibility and confidence in our public services and ensures that we meet the needs of our communities.

The Council recognises that the function of governance is to ensure that the Council and our partners fulfil our purpose and achieve our intended outcomes for citizens and service users and operate in an effective, efficient, economic and ethical manner. It is recognised that this principle guides all of the Council's governance activities.

The Council has adopted this comprehensive Code of Governance to ensure that it has exemplary governance arrangements in place. It is recognised that good governance leads to good management, good performance, and good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and thereby good outcomes for citizens and service users.

It is important that the Council not only has good governance arrangements in place to ensure this takes place but is also seen to have these arrangements in place so that the public can have confidence in what the Council does.

This Code follows the Guidance issued by CIPFA/SOLACE as a means of ensuring that Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council has good governance arrangements in place.

3. The Governance Framework

In order to demonstrate the fulfilment of its commitment the Council operates a governance framework. The governance framework sets out how the Council is operating in order to demonstrate compliance, on-going improvement, its commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards and levels of governance and also to prepare for the compilation of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

The Council has based its governance framework on the guidance produced in 2007 Delivering Good Governance in Local Government published by CIPFA/SOLACE and the addendum issued in November 2012. The framework sets out 6 core principles for good governance.

4. The Six Core Principles of Good Governance

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council supports the six core principles developed by the independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services and this Code of Corporate Governance identifies how the Council follows these principles.

Focusing on the purpose of the authority, the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

- Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users
- Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service, whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning
- Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

- 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
- Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard
- Ensuring relationships between the authority its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other

Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

- Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance
- Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

- Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny
- Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants / needs
- Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place
- Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area

Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

- Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles

- Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

- Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships
- 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
- Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

5. Demonstrating Compliance with the Core and Supporting Principles

Maintain a local code of corporate governance.

Appendix 1 and 2 of this document set out in detail how the Council will support these principles and demonstrates how it will meet the specific requirements of the framework. Appendix 1 is more a narrative outline. Appendix 2 is a tabular outline. Following the annual review of corporate governance this document will be updated to ensure it provides an accurate statement of the Council's current position in relation to governance standards.

Review of the Council's Corporate Governance.

The Council will arrange for regular, at least annual, independent reviews of its corporate governance arrangements to be carried out by Internal Audit to ensure continuing compliance with best practice.

In addition the Council will ensure that there is an on-going process of self-assessment of governance standards and improvement planning.

Following each review and self-assessment the Council will ensure that an improvement action plan is produced, or an existing one updated, in order to address any significant weaknesses identified and ensure continuous improvement in the system of corporate governance.

Report publicly on compliance with governance arrangements in the Annual Governance Statement.

The Council will produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This will accompany the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. It will state what arrangements the Council has in place to ensure the effectiveness of its governance framework and the degree to which the Council has followed its stated governance principles.

The AGS will also highlight any areas the Council considers to require significant improvement and outline the actions planned to address them.

The annual corporate governance review and self-assessment results will provide sources of assurance used to inform the compilation of the AGS. Other sources of assurance include the risk management and performance & resource management systems, Internal Audit reporting and external inspection regimes.

The Audit Committee and Corporate Governance Group will review the robustness of the AGS. The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council are required to sign off the AGS.

6. Responsibilities

Every Council officer and member has a responsibility to ensure their personal conduct and the organisations governance arrangements are always of the highest standard possible.

Senior managers have a responsibility for reviewing governance standards in their areas of responsibility annually and for providing documented assurance of their adequacy, and for identifying and implementing any necessary improvement actions.

Improvement actions should be reflected in the appropriate business plans.

The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services has a responsibility to ensure that the Council makes arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs.

The Monitoring Officer will provide advice on the scope of the powers and the authority to make decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity, and Budget and Policy Framework issues to all Councillors and will support and advise Councillors and officers in their respective roles.

The Chief Executive and Leader will ensure that an annual review is completed of corporate governance arrangements and give assurances on their adequacy in the Annual Governance Statement which will accompany the Statement of Accounts.

The Corporate Governance Group and the Audit Committee will ensure that the Code of Corporate Governance is reviewed regularly to reflect on-going developments and planned improvements to the framework and authorise any amendments.

7. Reporting

The annual review of corporate governance will be reported to the Audit Committee. The main points of this review will be summarised in the published Annual Governance Statement, which will be made available on the Council's internet site.

8. Communications and Training

The Corporate Governance Code will be published and accessible to all Council employees and members. Induction training will make reference to corporate governance arrangements. The Corporate Governance Code will be reported publicly to citizen and service users with a copy available on the authority's website. The Annual Governance Statement will be reported publicly, with a copy made available via the website.

PRINCIPLE 1:

Focus on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

The Council supports the above principle by:

- exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.
- ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning
- ensuring that the Authority makes best use of resources and that taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money.

- 1 The Council has a clear statement of its purpose and vision as set out in the Council Plan. This has recently been updated for 2015/16, and reflects the Council's ambitions for 'Investing in Stockport'.

The Investing in Stockport Programme of Reform and Growth is a very positive and proactive approach to meeting the financial challenges we face over the next four years. It focuses on making the best use of the resources we have and can obtain, working with partners across all public services to make the changes needed to ensure that;

- Our neighbourhoods are successful and sustainable.
- Our communities are resilient and empowered.
- Our people are independent.

Investing in Stockport is based on the principle 'invest to save' – helping people to be more independent so that there is less demand for services in the future. This is driven by increased collaboration and wider public service reform, for example through the integration of health and social care services. The programme is also driving economic growth with significant capital investment in a number of ambitious developments in the town centre and across the borough. The Investing in Stockport growth and reform programme provides the strategic framework for the Council Plan, setting out the overarching strategy for the

Authority including its priorities and the outcomes that the Council is seeking to achieve. The Plan provides a clear basis for corporate and service planning which is carried out in accordance with the Corporate Planning Cycle.

The Council Plan is developed and agreed within the context of the Council's budget and underpinned by the Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy.

The Council is working with partners to develop a 'Borough Plan' which will reflect a shared long-term vision across the Stockport Partnership, based on the Investing in Stockport outcomes. It is intended to publish the Borough Plan in summer 2015, as a replacement for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

- 2 The Council reviews its vision for the local area through a variety of means including ongoing analysis of performance, a review of national and local drivers for change and consultation with stakeholders, including residents, businesses, partners and agents.
- 3 The Council uses a range of methods to measure and review the achievement of key outcomes. This includes carrying out satisfaction surveys and monitoring relevant performance indicators and objectives within plans and strategies. The Council produces comprehensive quarterly Performance and Resource Reports based on delivery of Council priorities, values and goals, along with the Council's spending plans and financial position. These highlight key activities supporting each priority alongside an analysis of achievements and performance risks to help inform decision makers. Performance and Resource Reporting is based around the Council's Executive Portfolio structure, with seven Portfolio Reports, a Corporate Report and a Leaders Report. These are produced on a quarterly basis and considered by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, the Executive, and Scrutiny Committees. Information on performance also informs the Council Plan and is fed into the budget process. This ensures that the Council reviews and monitors the achievements of key outcomes within the Council Plan and continues to reflect the needs of its users in order to ensure improvement.
- 4 The Council has put in place effective arrangements to deal with potential failures in service delivery. The Council has a comprehensive comments, compliments and complaints scheme. All employees are subject to performance and development review processes which should address any failures in service delivery by employees. This is applied consistently through the Performance and Development Review Guidance for Senior Managers and M Grades.
- 5 The Council works in many different partnerships, ranging from the strategic to the operational. When the Council works in partnership it has a methodology that ensures there is a common vision underpinning this work, and that it is understood and agreed by all partners. The overarching vision for the Stockport partnership is set out in the Community Strategy, which is delivered through a number of Thematic Partnerships. The governance, structure, priorities and performance framework of the Stockport Partnership are currently being reviewed, in order to reflect changes at a national and regional level, along with new strategic collaborative and commissioning arrangements.

PRINCIPLE 2:

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose, with clearly defined functions and roles.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

The Council supports the above principle by:

- ensuring effective leadership throughout the Authority by being clear about Executive and non-Executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.
- ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between elected members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard.
- ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Code of Governance supports the above principles by:

1. Council has set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Executive and of the Executive's members individually and the Authority's approach towards putting this into practise. The role and form of composition of the Executive, Executive Leader and individual Executive Councillors is set out in Article 7 of Part II of the Council's Constitution.
2. Council has set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Executive and of the Executive's members individually and the Authority's approach towards putting this into practise. The role and form of composition of the Executive, Executive Leader and individual Executive Councillors is set out in Article 7 of Part II of the Council's Constitution.

The Constitution provides that the Executive is responsible for all the functions of the Council that are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council. The manner in which Executive business is transacted is governed by written procedures and principles contained in the Executive Procedure Rules and the Protocol for Executive Decisions within the Constitution.

3. The Council has set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of councillors who are not part of the Executive, and councillors generally and of senior officers. All members of the Council attend council meetings and each councillor is a member of one of the Council's seven Area Committees at which local issues and issues relevant to the area are discussed. Councillors who are not part of the Executive are able to sit on the five Scrutiny Committees which can hold the Executive to account by reviewing decisions, undertaking reviews of the Council's functions, and consider any relevant matters

affecting the borough or its residents. These non-executive councillors also serve on “ordinary” committees which consider a variety of non-executive functions.

4. The general powers delegated to all Corporate Directors and specific powers delegated to individual Corporate Directors and Senior Council Officers are clearly set out in the Scheme of Delegation within the Constitution.
5. The Council has developed protocols to ensure effective communication between councillors and officers in their respective roles. The Council’s Constitution contains a significant amount of formal guidance in the form of procedure rules, codes, and protocols to ensure that councillors are aware of their roles, powers and duties in relation to the Council Meeting, the Executive, Scrutiny Committees, contracts and a Code of Conduct for Councillors. The Constitution also contains codes and protocols advising on the Code of Conduct of Officers and a specific protocol on Councillor/Officer Relations. In addition, all councillors receive a weekly ‘e-brief’ which includes the latest information on local government issues and publications, along with relevant local information.

Agendas, reports and published decisions are available to councillors and the general public via the Council’s web pages.

6. The Leader and the Chief Executive recognise their role in ensuring good governance emanates throughout the organisation. They are acutely conscious that all the evidence shows that effective, complimentary working between a leader and a chief executive is key to the effectiveness of a local authority. They have therefore developed a clear understanding of their respective roles within the context of the Council’s objectives; and they intend to strengthen that understanding even further through the work planned with the Leadership Centre for Local Government. Their regular meetings (at least weekly) help ensure that they communicate frequently and effectively and share intelligence on any issues where role confusion might otherwise be possible.
7. The Council has set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective independent Remuneration Panel. Remuneration and terms and conditions of the Council’s officer base are strategically managed by the People and Organisational Development Service within Corporate and Support Services. The Council has a Human Resources Strategy approved by the Council. Individual Corporate Directors are responsible for Human Resources issues within their service areas for staff below service director level. In addition, the Council operates a job evaluation scheme.

The terms and conditions of members’ remuneration are clearly set out in the Members’ Allowances Scheme within the Council’s Constitution. The Scheme covers basic and special responsibility allowances, pensions and what amount to an “approved duty”. The Scheme is approved by the Council following preparation and review by an independent Remuneration Panel.

8. The Council ensures that its vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that its vision is clearly articulated and disseminated.

The Council conveys vision for the future, strategic direction, priorities and targets to the community by a number of methods. The Council Plan, Policy Framework and Medium Term Financial Plan, and a variety of other plans and strategies are considered in public at local Area Committees, Scrutiny Committees, Executive and Council Meetings.

Notices of all key decisions to be taken are published in the Council's Forward Plan in which the community is advised firstly that the decision is to be taken and secondly to whom representations can be made. In this the public interest in major decisions to be taken by the Council is stimulated.

All agendas and reports for public meetings, approved major documents in final format, and minutes and decisions are available via the Council's web site.

9. When working in partnership the Council ensures:

- that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership;
- that the roles and responsibilities of the partners are agreed so that there is effective leadership and accountability;
- that representatives or organisations make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.

The Stockport Partnership requires governance arrangements and mechanisms to be in place, and formal partnerships must have an agreement in place to cover monitoring arrangements, decision making, their legal position and financial responsibilities, and controls including a partnership code of conduct. These arrangements are the responsibility of individual partnerships, and are overseen by the Stockport Business Management Group (SBMG) which includes Chief Officers from across Stockport's public services.

The Council ensures that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery by partnerships through inclusion of key data in corporate and portfolio reports, along with membership of thematic partnership boards and headline reporting through the Leader's Report. Any areas where there might be need for improvement are considered and acted upon at the highest level.

10. Joint arrangements will include the Council's participation in the following:-

- AGMA Executive Board.
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority/Transport for Greater Manchester Committee/Joint Scrutiny Pool

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority was established in 2012, and has given power to exercise functions relating to transport and to economic development and regeneration for the whole of the Greater Manchester area.

The Council and Stockport Clinical Commissioning Group have entered into a partnership arrangement under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006. This agreement provides that each partner will ensure that it will delegate such function to the Health and Wellbeing Board or the relevant Lead Commissioner to ensure that each partner can discharge its commissioning duties through the direction of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

11. The Council has determined a scheme of delegated and reserve powers within the Constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decisions by the Council taking account of relevant legislation and it ensures

that it is monitored and updated when required. The Council's Scheme of Delegation is included in the Constitution which is updated as required. This clearly sets out functions reserved to the Council Meeting, the Executive Councillors, collectively and individually, and other decision-making bodies of the Council including officer delegated powers.

The Constitution contains a list of Policy Framework items which must be approved by the Council Meeting and in respect of which the view of Scrutiny Committees and the Executive Meeting collectively are considered.

The Scheme also identifies and sets out the decision-making body for both "local choice functions", those which the Council Meeting can determine to be either Executive or non-Executive, and those functions which cannot by law be discharged by the Executive.

12. The Council ensures that effective management arrangements are in place at the top of the organisation. The Council has made the Chief Executive responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management. The Council has in place a Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services to be 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. The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services, reports directly to the Chief Executive and is a member of the leadership team with a status at least equivalent to the other members. The authority's governance arrangements allow the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services direct access to the Chief Executive and other leadership team members through a combination regular formal meetings and ad-hoc meetings as required.
13. In addition the Council has appointed a Monitoring Officer to be responsible to the Authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed. The Council employs a Head of Legal & Democratic Governance to ensure that all applicable statutes, regulations, and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with.

The Chief Executive as Head of Paid Services is responsible for all matters associated with the professional management of the Council. The Chief Executive is assisted by three Corporate Directors, each of which is responsible for a designated strategic area of the Council's service.

14. The functions of the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services as the Council's Section 151 officer are set down in statute and are defined in the Constitution. The functions of the Council's Monitoring Officer are clearly set out in Article 14 and CP15 of the Constitution.

PRINCIPLE 3:

Promoting the values of the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

The Council supports the above principle by:

- ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance
- ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Code of Governance meets these requirements by:

1. Developing and maintaining shared values including leadership values both for the organisation and its staff, reflecting public expectations about the conduct and behaviour of individuals and groups within and associated with the authority. The Council's Diversity and Equality Policy sets out its vision and objectives for promoting diversity and equality. The Stockport Partnership shares a commitment to provide the community leadership needed to improve the quality of life for people in the borough. The Council's Constitution details the codes and protocols which the Council has adopted to reflect the behaviour that is expected from members and officers.
2. The Council uses these shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority. The Council's Monitoring Officer plays an active part in ensuring that the codes are followed.
3. The Council has developed and adopted formal codes of conduct defining the standards of personal behaviour such as:
 - CP1 - Code of Conduct for Councillors and Voting Co-opted Members.
 - CP2 - Officers' Code of Conduct.
 - CP3 - Protocol on Councillor/Officer Relations.
4. The Council has developed and maintained an effective Standards Committee which acts as a means to raise awareness and take the lead in ensuring high standards of conduct are firmly embedded within the local culture. The terms of reference are clearly set out in the Constitution.

5. The Council has put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the Authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interests in dealing with different stakeholders and has put in place appropriate processes, such as the Officers Code of Conduct, to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.
6. The Council has adopted the Code of Conduct which provides that members must declare personal interests in matters and also not take part in the decision making process if they have a prejudicial interest.
7. The Council has put in place arrangements to ensure that its procedures and operations are designed in conformity with the appropriate ethical standard. The Council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring lawfulness and fairness of decision making. In addition the Constitution provides that the Monitoring Officer will contribute to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct and ethics through the provision of support to the Standards Committee.
8. The Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer monitor the procedures and operations to ensure their continued compliance. The Council's Partnership Toolkit ensures that there are clear goals and vision for a partnership and agreed a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. These values must always be borne in mind by the partnership and be demonstrated by partner's behaviour, both individually and collectively.
9. The Council's systems and processes for financial administration, financial control and protection of the authority's resources and assets are designed in conformity with the Council's Financial procedure rules and arrangements are in place to monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice through regular management review and internal audit assurance.
10. The Council has a range of policies, procedures and arrangements in place to provide robust management of information governance. Further work is planned to incorporate these into a coherent Information Governance Framework. Included within this is the Serious Information Governance Incident (SIGI) Procedure which sets out the Council's arrangements for managing incidents. This includes a Data Protection Panel whose objective is to consider all breaches in order to review investigations, direct the relevant actions and to mitigate against future risk. The Panel meets on a regular basis to discuss specific breaches and to discuss ways of improving control and awareness throughout the Council.
11. The Council has a nominated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) whose responsibility includes ensuring that the Council's information risks are appropriately managed and leading a culture of good practice in relation to information governance.
12. The Caldicott Guardian role is responsible for ensuring that the processes within Social Care and Health satisfy the highest practical standards for handling Service User information.
13. The Council has adopted a "Local Code of Corporate Governance" in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework for Corporate Governance. The Council undertakes an annual review of the Code of Corporate Governance and associated arrangements.

PRINCIPLE 4:

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

The Council supports the above principle by:

- being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny
- having good quality information, advice and support, to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs
- ensuring an effective risk management system is in place
- using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Code of Governance supports the above principles by:

1. Developing and maintaining an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Authority's performance overall. The Council's established scrutiny function consists of five Scrutiny Committees and a Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee. The function is reviewed regularly. An annual "Scrutiny report" is produced. The Council also participates in a number of joint scrutiny arrangements, principally with local health bodies.
2. Developing and maintaining open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based. The Council's decision making processes are detailed in the Constitution. The Council, Executive and Committee meetings are open to the public and the vast majority of decisions are made in open session and are formally recorded and published. There are further mechanisms of ensuring that members' and officers' decisions are well documented
3. Putting in place arrangements so that conflicts of interests on behalf of members and employees can be avoided and appropriate processes to ensure that the arrangements continue to operate in practice. The members have to follow the Code of Conduct which is contained within the Constitution, along with other certain protocols. The Council's Monitoring Officer maintains a Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality. Officers also have to comply with the Employee Code of Conduct and appropriate protocols detailed within the Constitution. In addition, employees declare interests at committee meetings. These protocols are monitored by the Monitoring Officer.

4. Putting in place arrangements for 'Whistleblowing' to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access. The Council has a confidential reporting policy ('Whistleblowing') which is embedded in the constitution and has been publicised to staff. The policy is also on the Council's web site so that contractors are aware of the policy.
5. Putting in place effective, transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints. The Council has in place and regularly reviews a compliments, comments, and complaints procedure, which offers a variety of ways to contact the Council.
6. Developing and maintaining an effective member committee which oversees the following functions: internal control, risk management, financial management and reporting, anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements, issues raised by internal and external auditors. This is achieved through the Audit Committee.
7. Having in place an effective Standards Committee which lies at the heart of decision making and awareness raising on standards issues. The Council has done this by establishing a strong Standards Committee and the Constitution lays down requirements for its composition, role and functions.
8. Ensuring that those making decisions are provided with information that is fit for the purpose - relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications. The Council's decision making procedures include details of the expected standards of report and information required to support decisions. A quarterly reporting system is in place where the Executive receives comprehensive timely and accurate service and financial performance information to assist its decision making role. Full Council approves the Council's budget, capital programme, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies including prudential indicators in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code.
9. Developing and maintaining effective arrangements for determining the remuneration of senior staff. The Constitution provides that Corporate Directors shall ensure that all appointments are made in accordance with the regulations of the Authority and approved establishments, grades and scales of pay, and that adequate budget provision is available. The Council published an Annual Pay Policy Statement, which is approved by the Council Meeting.
10. Ensuring that professional advice on legal and financial matters is available and recorded well in advance of decision and is used appropriately when decisions have significant legal or financial implications. The Council's decision-making procedures require the inclusion of legal and financial advice in reports on matters requiring an Executive decision as appropriate. In addition, the Council has appointed a Section 151 officer, and a joint Monitoring Officer/ Council Solicitor.
11. Ensuring that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers of all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job. The Corporate Governance Group monitors the development and maintenance of both Departmental and Corporate Risk Registers. The Corporate Leadership Team receives regular in-year updates on the management of risks within the Corporate Risk Register. Risk management is embedded in the Council's overall

Business and Financial Planning processes, and its' project management requirements, and the monitoring of risks is a key element of the Council's performance and resource management framework. Ongoing Risk management training has been provided to relevant members and officers, and is embedded in our officer/manager development programme.

12. Ensuring an effective Internal Audit function is resourced and maintained. The Internal Audit & Risk Manager reports in his own name on the entire range of the Council's activities in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The service has an approved charter which sets out its rights of access to all information held by the Council and an overall opinion is produced by the Internal Audit & Risk Manager in compliance with the above standards. In addition, the Internal Audit & Risk Manager has direct access to the Chair of the Audit Committee and the members of the Corporate Leadership Team both collectively and individually.
13. Ensuring the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services in his capacity as Section 151 Officer has direct access to the audit committee and external audit. The Corporate Director has direct access to the Audit Committee and meets with the Chair of the committee prior to each quarterly Audit Committee meeting to discuss matters for the agenda. The Corporate Director also has regular meetings with the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton.
14. Ensuring the authority's arrangements for financial and internal control and managing risk are addressed in annual governance reports. The Annual Governance Statement covers the full range of the Council's activities. It is informed by the annual audit opinion produced by the Internal Audit & Risk Manager together with a review of Corporate Governance arrangements.
15. Ensuring that the authority puts into place effective internal financial controls covering codified guidance, budgetary systems, supervision, management safeguards, segregation of duties, accounting procedures, information systems and authorisation and approval processes. The Financial Procedure Rules set out the need for effective internal financial arrangements.
16. Actively recognising the limits of lawful activity placed on it by the ultra vires doctrine but also striving to utilise its powers to the full benefit of the community. The Council's Constitution clarifies what powers the Authority has and who can exercise them. In addition the Corporate and Support Services Directorate give advice on whether decisions are within the power of the Council, whilst all directorates strive to use the available powers to fully develop the Council's aims and objectives in its Council Plan.
17. Observing all specific legislative requirements placed upon the Council, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular integrating the key principles of administrative law, (rationality, legality and natural justice) into their procedures and decision making. The Council's Constitution recognises the principles of natural justice when the Council is acting at a tribunal or in a quasi judicial manner or determining/considering the civil rights and obligations or the criminal responsibility of any person.

PRINCIPLE 5:

Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers (including the statutory officers) also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

The Council supports the above principle by:

- making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles
- developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group
- encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of resources in balancing continuity and renewal.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Code of Governance supports the above by:

1. Assessing the skills required by members and officers and making a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively. For officers the Council has comprehensive job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that our staff have the skills to carry out those roles and thereafter the Council is committed in ensuring appropriate training for staff.

In developing members' skills, the Council has adopted a Learning and Development Strategy for members. This strategy states that the Council is committed to providing learning and development opportunities to assist members in developing and maintaining the skills and knowledge required in fulfilling their roles as members. The Council's stated commitment is to develop a supportive learning environment for member development to encourage members to make full use of learning and development support.

2. Ensuring 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. The Head of Paid Service, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer are all given clear and specified roles within the Constitution. The Constitution provides that these officers will have the appropriate resources given to them in order to perform their statutory roles.
3. Providing induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis. The Council has a comprehensive induction scheme for members' which includes the distribution

of an introductory booklet for members entitled 'First Things First'. All new and transferring employees will receive an effective induction tailored to their needs. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the induction process is tailored to the needs of the individual and for ensuring that the process is carried out thoroughly and effectively. Each induction must conform to the minimum standards set out in the Council's 'Induction Standards' and checklist.

4. Developing skills on a continuing basis to improve performance including the ability to scrutinise and challenge, and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed. The Council has a comprehensive Performance and Development Review scheme which ensures that performance is constantly being improved and monitored. Furthermore the new Stockport Manager project aims to identify those key competencies expected of managers with the development of a toolkit. Any identified skills gaps will be used to provide on-going support.
5. Putting in place arrangements for reviewing the performance of the Executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan. The Council's Constitution provides a clear separation of the Executive and scrutiny roles within the Council's political management arrangements. There are five Scrutiny Committees which can scrutinise and challenge a variety of areas, namely, Children and Young People, Adult Social Care & Housing, Environment and Economy, Corporate, Resource Management and Governance, and Health and Wellbeing. In addition the Area Committees can scrutinise and monitor the operation of services provided by the Executive and the proposals by the Executive for activities within the area. The Learning and Development Strategy for members provides a process whereby training and development needs can be assessed and provided.
6. Having effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority. The Council utilises its well-established methods of engaging with the community including use of focus groups, Stockport Partnership Forum, black and minority community network, voluntary and community sector network, faith network, one-off consultation events and Area Committees. It also makes full use of the opportunities for electronic consultation and engagement.

PRINCIPLE 6:

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES:

The Council supports the above principle by:

- exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders including partnerships, developing constructive accountability relationships
- taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with an accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning
- making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meeting responsibility to staff.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's Code of Governance supports the above principles by:

1. The Council has made clear to itself, all staff and the community to whom each part of the Council is accountable and for what.
2. The Council has a strategic Communications and Consultation Plan for the Investing in Stockport Programme. There is also a Policy on Public Consultation and Engagement (which was adopted by CLT) and an associated toolkit for officers.
3. Having in place arrangements to enable the Council to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Council has well established methods of engaging with the community including:
 - focus groups (face to face and on-line) - with, for example, black and minority ethnic groups, refugees and asylum seekers, disabled people, young people, older people
 - employee forums/black and minority ethnic employees forum, disabled employees forum, LGBT employees forum
 - black and minority ethnic community network
 - voluntary and community sector network
 - faith network
 - one-off consultation events
 - Area Committees.

- Mystery shopping
- Deliberative events
- Questionnaire surveys by phone, hard copy and electronically

Consultation is carried out for specific purposes and also to establish differing priorities, aspirations and attitudes. The Council recognises that different sections of the community have different priorities and is able to analyse consultation results on this basis.

When working in partnership, the Council ensures that engagement and consultation undertaken by the partnership has a planned methodology and understands its target audience and the outcomes that are being pursued. Existing mechanisms and groups are used where appropriate. In the work cycle of the partnership it is clear and demonstrable to the public what happens to any feedback and the positive changes that are made as a result. The Council issues Consultation Guidance to all members which sets out clear processes to be followed as well as helping to identify the most appropriate methods of consultation and feedback, depending on the audience.

Having a clear policy on the types of issues that the Council will meaningfully consult and engage with the public and service users, including a feedback mechanism for those consultees. The Council is establishing a Strategic Consultation Plan which will set out an annual plan of forthcoming consultation. The plan will specifically outline the means of ensuring feedback to consultees as well as the types of issues upon which the public and service users will be consulted.

4. On an annual basis, the Council publishes a Council Plan which outlines 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. Key activities, plans and achievements are published in the Council newspaper - 'The Review' - which is published four times a year.
5. Having in place effective systems to protect the rights of staff. The Council's confidential reporting policy (Whistleblowing) is set out in the Council's Constitution. The policy states that the Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. The policy aims to:
 - encourage employees to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
 - provide avenues for employees to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
 - ensure that employees receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied
 - re-assure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure in good faith.

The policy sets out in detail the safeguards that apply. In addition, the Council has a range of effective policies and procedures including:

- Code of Conduct for Employees, Grievance procedures, Dignity at Work Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Diversity and Equalities policies
6. The Council produces an annual report on the scrutiny function which summarises activity undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees during the previous year.
 7. Ensuring that the Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users, and its staff, and ensures that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnership, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so. The Council has set out its commitment to openness and transparency in the Constitution and in the Customer Care Charter. It is also committed to meeting the statutory requirements of the Transparency Code 2014 by publishing information in an 'open data' format available for re-use by interested parties.

STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

DELIVERING SOUND GOVERNANCE

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local Area

- 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**
- 1.2 Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning**
- 1.3 Ensuring that the Authority makes best use of resources and that taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money**

Supporting Principle	How We Demonstrate Compliance
<p>1.1 The Council will develop and promote a clear statement setting out its purpose and vision.</p> <p>The Council will ensure that this vision and its supporting outcomes are clearly linked to its business planning cycle and inform development of strategies / plans and objectives for the Council and its partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/socialcarehealth/healthandwellbeing/healthpartners/jointhwbstrat ➤ Stockport Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy represents the long-term wider vision. http://www.stockportpartnership.org.uk/521360/671117/stockport2020strategy ➤ 'Investing in Stockport - the Stockport Council Plan 2015/16 sets out the vision and key priorities for the Council over the next 12 months. http://www.stockport.gov.uk/councilplan ➤ The Council Plan is published on an annual basis alongside the Council's budget and is underpinned by the Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital programme and Treasury Management Strategy. Collectively these set out the specific deliverables for each year and the means by which these outcomes will be supported. ➤ The vision and outcomes are a basis for corporate and service planning and underpin development of Council strategies and plans. ➤ The Investing in Stockport Programme of growth and reform sets out the key strategic vision for the Council, and is reflected in the outcomes which drive the Council Plan.
<p>The Council will review on a regular basis, its</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2012-2015 will be reviewed after the 3 year period.

<p>vision for the local area and its implications for the Council's governance arrangements.</p> <p>The Council will ensure that corporate governance arrangements are reviewed at least annually in accordance with best practice guidance and improvement action plans implemented to address any system weakness identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Council undertakes an annual review of its Corporate Governance arrangements and identifies improvement actions as noted in this Code. This is undertaken by the Corporate Governance Group.
<p>The Council will ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Sustainable Community Strategy is in place which sets out the overall vision for the Stockport Partnership. A new 'Borough Plan' is currently in development to reflect a new set of shared priorities and delivery arrangements. This is due to be published in summer 2015. http://www.stockportpartnership.org.uk/ourpartners/statsectorpartners/ ➤ A partnership protocol and this governance code are in place, along with a code of practice for partnership working.
<p>The Council will publish an annual report and annual accounts on a timely basis to communicate the Council's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Statement of Accounts published in September. ➤ Annual business plan. ➤ An annual report is published in September. This provides for a composite review of organisational performance in one document. ➤ Performance is also reported via the Portfolio Performance and Resource Reports on a quarterly basis.
<p>1.2 The Council will 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>Implement and maintain robust monitoring systems to identify and deal with failure or potential failure in service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Council, in order to ensure improvement, has in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Plan. - Medium term financial plan. - Portfolio Performance and Resource Agreements. - Organisational Development and Improvement plan. ➤ There is a robust and effective authority wide performance & resource management framework which links strategic and service level business planning using a consistent methodology to deliver the corporate priorities. ➤ A Corporate Information Assurance and Data Quality Strategy is in place.
<p>1.3 The Council will decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the Council or partnership has the information needed to review and measure value for money and performance effectively, and to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Financial reports to Executive demonstrate achievement of efficiency savings each quarter. ➤ This is a key responsibility of the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services in reporting through to the Executive and full Council on value for money. ➤ External Audit annual VFM conclusion presented to Audit Committee every September. ➤ Each Directorate is supported by a specific finance team that provides financial advice and guidance

demonstrate attainment of VFM / efficiency savings. The Council will implement mechanisms to assess the environmental impact of council policies / plans and decisions.	<p>to facilitate decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stockport has an environmental policy in place. http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/sustainability/environmentalpolicy/ ➤ The strategy is independently assessed to receive the ISO14001:2004 standard that is designed to help organisations set up the elements of an effective Environmental Management System.
--	---

CORE PRINCIPLE 2

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

2.1 Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority by being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function

2.2 Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard

2.3 Ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other

Supporting Principle	How We Demonstrate Compliance
2.1 The Council will set out a clear statement of the respective roles & responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Council's Constitution (Part 2 Articles of the Constitution, Part 3 scheme of delegation, Part 4 procedure Rules and Part 5 Codes and protocols) and the record of decisions and supporting materials. ➤ This is reviewed at least annually. ➤ Revised Constitution reviewed and approved by annual Council in April 2014. http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=587&info=1&md=constitution
The Council will set out a clear statement of the respective roles & responsibilities of the other Council members, members generally & senior officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The roles of Members and Officers as set down in the Constitution.
2.2 The Council and Executive Leader will 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The scheme of delegation. ➤ Constitution. ➤ Fully embedded scheme of delegated decisions and financial delegation reviewed regularly with mechanisms in place to maintain up to date information.
The Council will make the chief executive (CEO) responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service and responsible for conditions of employment; scheme of delegation; statutory provisions; Job descriptions/specification; and the performance management system. ➤ As a member of SMT the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services has this access to CEO and to other members of SMT.

<p>The Council will 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 & objectives is maintained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Chief Executive and Leader have considered and agreed how best to establish and maintain effective communication. ➤ The SMT and the Executive operate effectively together and have an informal meeting each month.
<p>The Council will:</p> <p>Make the Chief Finance Officer (the S151 Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records & accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Section 151 responsibilities are within the role of the Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services). ➤ The Council considers statutory reports and budget documentation as advised by the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services. ➤ Job descriptions and person specification. ➤ The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services is a CIPFA qualified accountant and has the relevant core responsibilities as set out. ➤ The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services' responsibilities include those set out in the CIPFA 2010 Statement on the Role of the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services in Local Government. The Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services ensures that they are properly understood throughout the authority. ➤ The Internal Audit & Risk Manager conforms with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and reports directly to the Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services. http://www.cipfa.org/Policy-and-Guidance/Reports/-/media/Files/Publications/Reports/Role_of_the_HIA_NOVEMBERv5.pdf
<p>The Council will make the Monitoring Officer responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Head of Legal and Governance operates as the Monitoring Officer and ensures that all agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with. ➤ The Monitoring Officer will provide advice on the scope of the powers and the authority to make decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity, and Budget and Policy Framework issues to all Councillors and will support and advise Councillors and officers in their respective roles. ➤ The Statutory Scrutiny Officer's role is to promote the role of the Council's Scrutiny Committees; to provide support to the Council's Scrutiny function and to local councillors; and to provide guidance to members and officers of the council in relation to the Scrutiny functions.
<p>2.3 The Council will develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Constitution sets down the protocol on Member/Officer relations and communications.
<p>The Council will set out the terms & conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process <i>including an effective remuneration panel.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pay and conditions policies and practices are in place. ➤ Annual Pay Policy Statement. http://www.stockport.gov.uk/2013/2986/253297/616459 ➤ Notice of the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members'

<p>Ensure that terms of remuneration of members and officers are clearly defined, documented and up to date.</p>	<p>10/10/2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members' remuneration panel in place http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/councildemocracy/democracy/membersallowances
<p>The Council will ensure that the organisation s vision, strategic plans, priorities, objectives & 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review and development on an annual basis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan. • Medium Term Financial Plan. • Performance & Resource Management framework. ➤ The MTFP is reviewed from April to December and public consultation takes place. ➤ The MTFP is approved by the Executive and The Council Meeting including the Annual Budget. ➤ Monthly and quarterly finance and performance monitoring takes place and is reported to members on a quarterly basis. ➤ Assumptions are reviewed quarterly and are reviewed formally on an annual basis.
<p>For joint working arrangements and when working in partnership the Council will ensure that members are clear about their roles & responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority.</p> <p>For joint working arrangements and when working in partnership the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership ➤ ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The protocol for partnership working requires that for each partnership there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear statement of the partnership principles and objectives. • clarity of each partner s role within the partnership. • definition of roles of partnership board members. • line management responsibilities for staff who support the partnership. • a statement of funding sources for joint projects and clear accountability for proper financial administration. • a protocol for dispute resolution within the partnership.

CORE PRINCIPLE 3

Promoting values for the council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

3.1 Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance

3.2 Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

Supporting Principle	How We Demonstrate Compliance
3.1 The Council will ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support & respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Member and officer Code of Conduct contained within the Council Constitution. ➤ Leadership Development Programme sets out expectations of officers. ➤ Member development programme sets out expectations of Members. ➤ Effective Standards Committee role.
The Council will ensure that standards of conduct & personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members & staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members /officers code of conduct. ➤ Performance appraisal for officers. ➤ Complaints procedures. ➤ Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy. ➤ Revised whistleblowing procedure following the introduction of the Bribery Act 2010. ➤ Further awareness raising during 2013/14 regarding anti-fraud bribery and corruption requirements and whistleblowing procedure as part of update of all people related policies. ➤ Member/officer protocols. ➤ Member/officer declarations of interest. ➤ Further awareness raising during 2013/14 regarding gifts & hospitality requirements. ➤ Serious Information Governance Incident procedure. ➤ Data Protection Panel. ➤ Corporate Information Governance Toolkit.
The Council will put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Standing orders. ➤ Codes of conduct ➤ Register of interests. ➤ Equality and diversity policy. http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/communitypeopleliving/yourcommunity/diversityequality ➤ Financial regulations/Contract regulations refreshed in 2012/13 and awareness raising undertaken with Members/officers.
3.2 The Council will develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community, partners and other public service providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Managers Handbook. ➤ Knowledgebase.

The Council will 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	➤ Equality Impact Assessments.
The Council will develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Terms of Reference revised in 2012 following introduction of new standards regime. ➤ The Standards Committee meet on a quarterly basis. http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=119 ➤ The committee includes two independent persons. ➤ Effective Standards Committee supported by robust evidence and data analysis.
The Council will 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	➤ Council Plan 2015/16.
In pursuing the vision of a partnership and other joint working the Council will agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by the partners behaviour both individually & collectively	➤ Stockport Business Management Group (SBMG).

CORE PRINCIPLE 4

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

4.1 Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny

4.2 Having good quality information, advice and support, to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs

4.3 Ensuring an effective risk management system is in place

4.4 Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area

Supporting Principle	How We Demonstrate Compliance
4.1 The Council will 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	➤ Effective Scrutiny Committee supported by robust evidence and data analysis.

responsible	
The Council will develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Decision-making protocols record of decisions and supporting materials are published on the Internet.
The Council will put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Members Code of Conduct. ➤ Officers Code of Conduct.
The Council will develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Audit Committee has clear terms of reference, an effective membership as evidenced by the self-assessment against the CIPFA checklist and receives appropriate training. ➤ Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services has direct access to the Audit Committee and external audit.
The Council will ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council's complaints procedure in place. ➤ Ombudsman complaints procedure in place. ➤ Review of administration of the Council's approach to issues raised by the Ombudsman.
4.2 The Council will ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for purpose relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Member's induction scheme. ➤ Member Development Programme. ➤ Clear and concise reports to Members. ➤ Specific training for specialist committees such as Audit Committee / Planning / Corporate Parenting. ➤ Officers training and professional qualifications to support decision making.
The Council will 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All reports to Council, Executive & committees are cleared by appropriate legal & financial officers. ➤ Record of decision making and supporting materials. ➤ Technical items discussed with External Audit as appropriate.
4.3 The Council will ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Risk Strategy and Policy revised in 2014. ➤ Financial Procedures and Contract procedures revised in 2012/13. ➤ Quarterly monitoring reports are produced on the Strategic Risk Register to SMB and the Executive. ➤ Directorate level risk reports in place and reviewed quarterly. ➤ Major projects risk registers in place and reviewed regularly. ➤ The Audit Committee receive monitoring reports twice a year.
The Council will ensure that effective arrangements are in place for whistle blowing to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whistle-blowing procedure refreshed in 2013/14 and awareness raising will be undertaken in 2014/15 as part of review of people related policies. ➤ Dedicated hotline in place.
4.4 The Council will actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council's Constitution. ➤ Monitoring Officer's provisions. ➤ Legal Services advises on decisions as appropriate.

the full benefit of their communities.	
The Council will recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Legal advice and appropriate training offered to all Directorates.
The Council will 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 rationality, legality and natural justice – into their procedures and decision making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitoring Officer provisions. ➤ Job description/specification. ➤ Statutory provision. ➤ Legal advice. ➤ Member training on effective decision making.

CORE PRINCIPLE 5

Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers (including the statutory officers) also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively

5.1 Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles

5.2 Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group

5.3 Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individual's skills and resources balancing continuity and renewal

Supporting Principle	How We Demonstrate Compliance
5.1 The Council will provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Member development plan. ➤ Induction programme for officers and Members. ➤ Training courses/information for officers and Members. ➤ Officer performance review process (PDR); induction; training & development.
The Council will ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles & that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Job description/personal specifications. ➤ Member induction. ➤ Annual review of personal performance and training & development requirements.
5.2 The Council will assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Member Development Plan. ➤ Member Personal Development Plans. ➤ Officer performance review process (PDR). ➤ Monitoring Officer and deputy Monitoring Officer provide bespoke training / advice. ➤ Corporate Director, Corporate and Support Services/nominated deputy provide bespoke

	training / advice.
The Council will 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Member Development Plan reflects requirements of a modern councillor including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the ability to scrutinise and challenge. - the ability to recognise when outside advice is required. - advice on how to act as an ambassador for the community. - leadership & influencing skills. - officer personal reviews and leadership programme.
The Council will ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example aims to address any training and development needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scrutiny function. ➤ Links to the Standards Committee.
5.3 The Council will 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strategic partnership framework. ➤ Stakeholders forums. ➤ Development of neighbourhood forums. ➤ Equality and Diversity policy. ➤ Revised Equality and Diversity delivery plan produced and implemented during 2012.
The Council will ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workforce Planning & organisational Development. ➤ Succession Planning. ➤ Member Development Programme. ➤ Citizenship/Local Democracy/Youth Parliament Work.

CORE PRINCIPLE 6

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

6.1 Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships

6.2 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

6.3 Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meeting responsibility to staff

Supporting Principle	How We Demonstrate Compliance
6.1 The Council will make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what. Consider the institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and the effectiveness of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council Plan. ➤ Policy Framework. ➤ Corporate, Directorate & Service Business Planning. ➤ Stockport Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-15. ➤ Voluntary Sector Review.

relationships and any changes required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Neighbourhood Strategy. ➤ Participation in WBP and Stockport Health and Wellbeing Board. ➤ Review of neighbourhood approach during 2012.
The Council will produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Scrutiny Report.
6.2 The Council will ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, including monitoring arrangements, and ensure that they operate effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Public Consultation and Engagement Policy</u>
The Council will ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Young people's voices. ➤ A joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) was developed by the Council, the Health & Wellbeing Board and GP consortia. ➤ JSNA considered in commissioning functions. ➤ Stockport Health and Wellbeing Board have prepared a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy , coordinating intentions from the NHS, social care, public health, and other health, determinants such as housing, education, environment and economy.
The Council will establish a clear policy on the types of issues that they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The <u>Communications Strategy</u> – One Place, One Voice.
The Council will on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority s vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Report. ➤ Annual financial statements. ➤ Council Plan. ➤ Budget Consultation. ➤ Adult Social Care local account.
The Council will ensure the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Constitution. ➤ Partnership Protocol. ➤ Code of Corporate Governance. ➤ Annual Governance Statement. ➤ <u>Freedom of Information publication scheme</u> ➤ <u>Transparency Code</u>
6.3 The Council will develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council s Constitution. ➤ Workforce & Organisational Development Programme. ➤ Trade union relationships. ➤ Joint consultation framework.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community including citizens and service users and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

Promoting the values of the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers (including the statutory officers) also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability

- exercising leadership by clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users
- ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning
- ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.

- ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority by being clear about executive and non executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function
- ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between elected members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard
- ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other.

- ensuring council members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that uphold high standards of conduct and exemplify effective governance
- ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.

- exercising leadership by being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny
- having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs
- making sure that an effective risk management system is in place
- recognising the limits of lawful action and observing both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law, but also accepting responsibility to use their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.

- making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well in their roles
- developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group
- encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of resources in balancing continuity and renewal.

- exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships
- taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery
- making best use of resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.