



AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

20th June 2024

Wednesday, 26th June, 2024, 6.00 pm in Town Hall, Market Street, Tamworth

SUPPLEMENT – ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Further to the Agenda and Papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following further information, which was not available when the agenda was issued:

Agenda No. Item

5. **Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance** (Pages 3 - 90)
(Report of the Chief Executive)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. C. V.' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Executive

To Councillors: C Adams, S Doyle, C Bain, M Couchman, P Turner, J Wadrup and
A Wells.

Wednesday, 26 June 2024

Report of the Chief Executive

Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To submit the refreshed Annual Governance Statement and Code of Corporate Governance for Audit & Governance Committee's approval.

Recommendations

That the proposed by approved:

1. The Annual Governance Statement (for inclusion in the annual statement of accounts) at **Appendix 1**; and
2. Code of Corporate Governance at **Appendix 2**.

Executive Summary

The Accounts and Audit Regulations require local authorities conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of their system of internal control and include a statement (Annual Governance Statement) with their published statement of accounts.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations stipulate that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) be prepared in accordance with 'proper practices'. As has been the case in previous years, the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016)' has been used as the framework to fulfil this requirement.

Additional guidance has been provided by CIPFA for 2023/24 and this has been adopted in the compilation of the AGS. Both the proposed AGS and Code of Corporate Governance has been circulated to Chief Executive, Executive Management Team and Assistant Directors for their review and update. All comments received have been incorporated into the AGS and Code of Corporate Governance.

The proposed Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 is attached at **Appendix 1**. It should be noted that the AGS only includes significant governance issues, the detail is contained within the Code of Corporate Governance.

The Code of Corporate Governance for 2023/24 has been refreshed and is attached as **Appendix 2**. The Code indicates what is expected as per the Framework (what assurance do we want) and what we have in place (what assurance do we get) to ensure that the principles of good governance are met.

This year's review has identified that the Council's governance arrangements largely comply with best practice. No areas for improvement were identified.

Options Considered

Not Applicable.

Resource Implications

None.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

Failure to produce an AGS would result in non-compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and a risk that failures in governance would not be identified and therefore addressed.

Equalities Implications

None.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

None.

Background Information

None.

Report Author

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List of Background Papers

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24
Appendix 2 – Code of Corporate Governance 2023/24

Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

What is Governance?

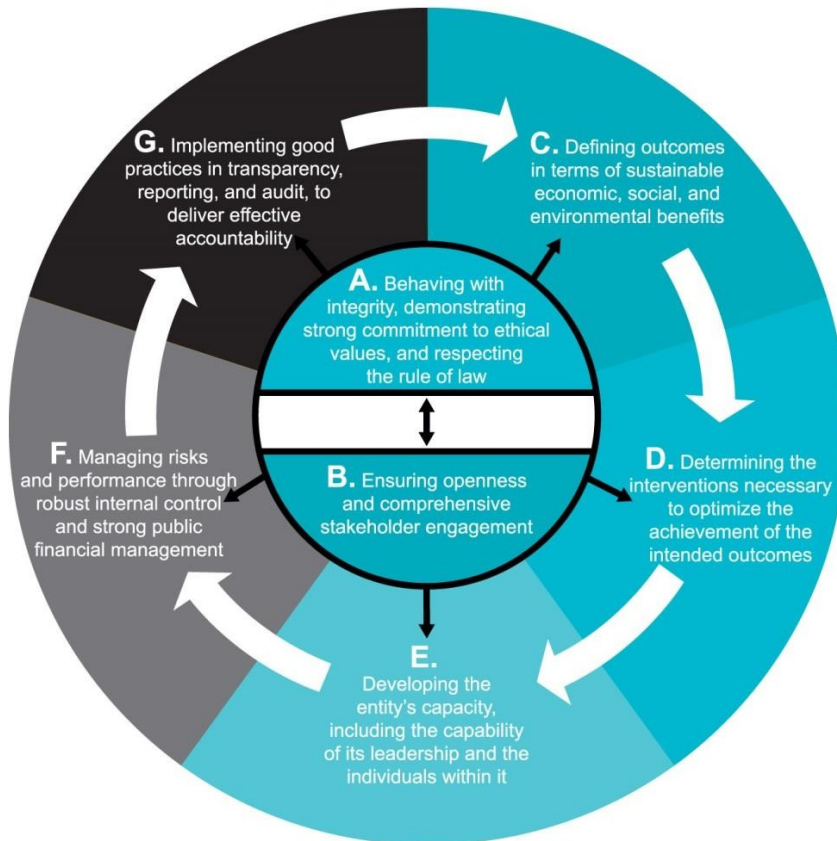
Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.

To deliver good governance in the Authority, both governing bodies (Members) and individuals working for it must try to achieve the Authority’s objectives whilst acting in the public interest.

Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.

The Core Principles of Good Governance

The diagram below, taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector, illustrates the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other.



Responsibility

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is completed in line with the law and statutory legislation, and that public money is spent wisely and properly accounted for. We will ensure that we continually improve the way we provide our services, whilst considering value for money.

We will ensure that we put in place proper arrangements to ensure our risks are managed, and that controls and the governance process are in place.

We have approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance which is consistent with principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. The Code demonstrates the supporting principles which underpin the core principles and identifies the assurance as outlined in the Framework. It also demonstrates what level of assurance we get and thus, identifies any areas for improvement. This forms the assurance framework for good governance and demonstrates that we know our governance arrangements are working. Links to all supporting evidence identified in the assurance framework are contained within the Code of Corporate Governance and are not repeated in this statement. The Code of Corporate Governance document is available on the Council's website.

Our Outcomes

Our desired outcomes for 2022-25 are detailed in the Corporate Plan and Council Vision. The Corporate Plan details our Vision and sets out our Thematic Priorities. Under each thematic priority, we detail our ambitions and how we are going to realise these. All outcomes we aim to achieve, along with changes we want to see and supporting information are detailed in the Corporate Plan.

For each activity or process we complete, we ensure that the appropriate governance arrangements are in place.

For 2023/24, we together with the rest of the UK, have faced a global crisis through the current geopolitical situations and 'cost of living' increases affecting our residents. This has been and will remain a significant factor affecting our operations in 2024/25 and beyond.

The Corporate Plan from 2022 to 2025 was approved at Cabinet on 17 March 2022. A new plan for 2025 is under development.

This work was brought together by councillors, during a number of councillor-led workshops and seminars, into a refocused vision to reflect new priorities. Again, this year collaborative budget setting workshops were held to ensure all councillors were able to have involvement in what is important to them and their residents.

Our vision is 'Tamworth – celebrating our heritage, creating a better future'

In order to achieve that vision, the Corporate Plan will be delivered with a workforce and organisation that has adapted to an unprecedented national challenge, working hand in hand with our partners and communities.

The vision, together with the Corporate Plan, details five areas of focus for the borough; including the key outcomes we are seeking to achieve and how we will work to achieve them.

Our primary areas of focus will be:

- The Environment
- The Economy
- Infrastructure
- Living in Tamworth
- The Town Centre

Each priority has a number of supporting areas of focus and progress will be achieved through the delivery of corporate and transformational projects; each having clearly defined objectives and outcomes.

CORPORATE PLAN SUMMARY

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL VISION

'Tamworth – celebrating our heritage, creating a better future'

1. THE ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Enforcement and education with regard to litter and fly-tipping
- ▶ Development of infrastructure for acting on Climate Change
- ▶ Support more people to recycle and to reduce waste
- ▶ Working with partners to protect, maintain and improve the green space offer

3. INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ Review Local Plan to improve the transport links within Tamworth
- ▶ Improve existing walkways and cycling routes
- ▶ Ensure more people can access council services digitally/digital enhancement with partners and within Council housing stock

2. THE ECONOMY

- ▶ Development of business initiatives to promote start up and growth
- ▶ Support business growth to generate employment opportunities by working with businesses
- ▶ Provision of good quality and affordable housing
- ▶ Improve tourism in terms of good access to information for visitors to help local businesses and Tamworth as a destination as a whole, maximise and improve the quality of the visitor experience

4. LIVING IN TAMWORTH

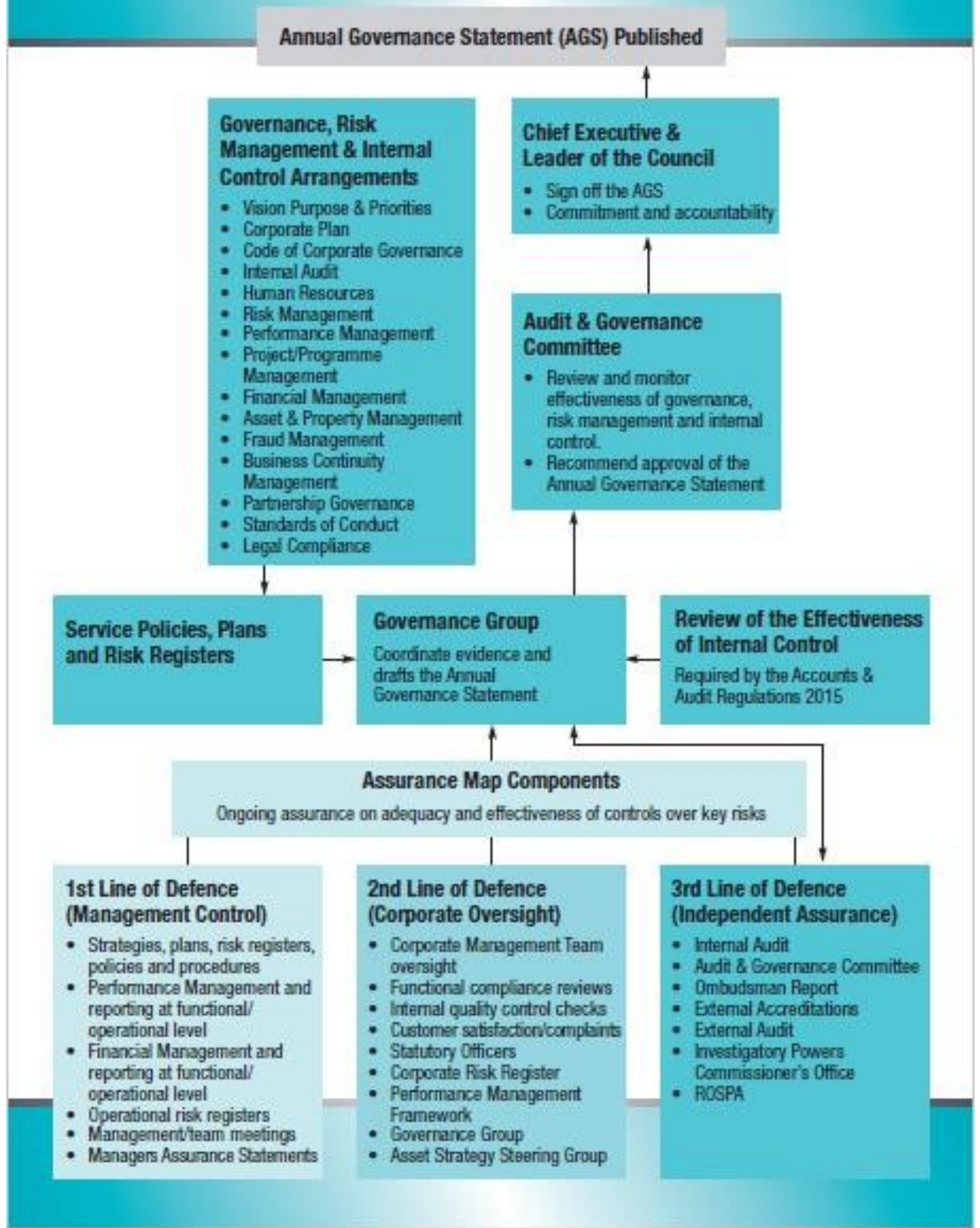
- ▶ Ensure adequate supply of affordable housing through the Local Plan review
- ▶ Investment in Neighbourhood and Place environment
- ▶ Through our Economic Development team, we will support job creation and business retention and expansion through interventions and advice, and seek to protect the local economy where we can influence this.
- ▶ Improve and promote Tamworth's historic and cultural assets and events
- ▶ Community Safety focus on neighbourhoods and place
- ▶ Working with partners to ensure the fear of crime within Tamworth is reduced

5. TOWN CENTRE

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to develop street market and extend supporting events around the market to add vibrancy within the town centre ▶ Create a branding scheme for "Created in Tamworth" ▶ Provide the infrastructure to improve evening and night time economy ▶ Embrace Tamworth's history and culture so as to build a sense of local pride and support our children's education and understanding of the significant part Tamworth played in British history | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to promote all outdoor events ▶ Development of a new Tamworth Enterprise Centre as part of the structural transformation of the town centre ▶ Make the town centre more accessible ▶ Provide the environment where the leisure and food offer can grow and flourish ▶ Working with others seek to improve the night-time transport offer to support the overall night-time economy |
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The Assurance Framework

The diagram below shows how the Assurance Framework is made up



What have we done to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our governance arrangements during 2023/24 including ensuring that those arrangements have not been compromised by the impact of the pandemic and subsequent recovery

The Authority has the responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework. This includes the system of internal control which is informed by:

- The work of Internal Audit which is detailed in the Internal Audit's Annual Report.
- the development and maintenance of the internal control environment by Corporate Management Team.
- Reports received from our External Auditors and any other review agencies or inspectorates.

During 2023/24, residents and our operations were impacted by cost of living increases. The Council continued to support vulnerable people, by making discretionary housing benefit payments and in developing a new 'banded' Localised Council Tax Relief scheme which was implemented on 1 April 2024. The COVID-19 emergency tested the Council's ability to move at pace, prioritise its service delivery and demonstrate its core values & purpose and this legacy sets the Council in good stead to meet any new or emerging challenges going forward.

To ensure our governance arrangements remained effective, the following actions have contributed to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the arrangements:

- The Council's Recovery & Reset Programme was formally closed on 31 March 2023, agreed at Cabinet on 6 April 2023 ([Link here](#)). The programme was subject to post implementation review by BDO (internal audit) and recognised as giving substantial assurance with significant success factors reported
- Increased residents' resilience and access to information through empowering and working with 'anchor' and third sector organisations to support our most vulnerable people
- Support our most vulnerable through preventing homelessness and helping people access suitable housing amidst major Government initiatives including the "everyone" in campaign, whilst also pausing non-essential moves
- Following meetings being held remotely due to the pandemic the Council recommenced its face to face meeting programme which are also streamed to YouTube
- The internal audit programme continued to include provision of days for assurance audits. This ensured that those charged with governance were able to obtain assurance over risks affecting the Council from the delivery of pandemic grants, such as productivity and governance. The ICT audit programme also included a review of Network Security.

The Council's 'business as usual' governance arrangements have continued to operate, including:

- The Code of Corporate Governance, set out in line with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*, has been reviewed and updated.
- Internal audit have reported to the Audit & Governance Committee on a quarterly basis and provided an opinion on the overall effectiveness of the system of internal control based upon the work completed. The statement for the 2023/24 financial year is as

follows:

'On the basis of audit work completed, Internal Audit's opinion on the council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control is reasonable in its overall design and effectiveness. Certain weaknesses and exceptions were highlighted by audit work. These matters have been discussed with management, to whom recommendations have been made. All of these have been, or are in the process of being addressed'.

- Our External Auditors provide a report to each Audit & Governance Committee. In their Auditors Annual Report (2022/23), they gave an unqualified opinion on the Statement of Accounts and an unqualified conclusion in respect of the Authority securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- The Corporate Risk Register is owned and reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Corporate Management Team and reported in the Quarterly Health Check to Cabinet. It is also reported in the risk management update to the Audit & Governance Committee.
- Manager's Assurance Statements have been completed by Executive Directors and Assistant Directors and have not identified any significant control issues.
- Financial Guidance and Financial and Contract Procedure Rules are reviewed on a regular basis, the latest review being approved by the Audit & Governance Committee in April 2024. A full review of the Constitution took place and was approved by Council in December 2020, this has been updated and will be presented to Council during 2024/2025 and scheduled for 9th July 2024.
- The Chief Finance Officer and Audit Manager are suitably experienced and qualified and comply with the CIPFA Statements on their respective roles.
- No issues were raised through the Counter Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing Policies.
- There were 20 data security breaches reported to the Data Protection Officer during the financial year, three of which were reported to the Information Commissioners Officer.
- Internal Audit are required to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. As part of this requirement, Internal Audit are required to complete an annual self-assessment against the Standards and produce a Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme (QAIP). This identifies areas for improvement to ensure compliance with the Standards and other quality areas. The self-assessment against the standards and the QAIP are reported to the Audit & Governance Committee [Link](#). The five yearly External Quality Assessment was completed during 2022/23 and the service achieved the highest level of compliance 'generally conforms'. An action plan for actions identified during the review has been agreed and all actions were fully implemented during 2023/24.
- The Performance Management Framework ensures that the Financial Health Check is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis and made readily available on the Authority's website.

- The Authority is currently compliant with the PSN Code of Connection. The compliance process includes assessments against governance, service management, information assurance conditions and technical controls and assures access to the Public Services Network. Our current compliance certificate expires in May 2024, the renewal process will be started prior to that to ensure continuity of PSN services.
- An annual update report is presented to the Audit & Governance Committee on the use of RIPA powers. During 2023/24, no RIPA authorisations were made.
- To assist in a more co-ordinated approach to managing projects, a Corporate Project Management template and process is now in place.
- A self-assessment of the Audit & Governance Committee's effectiveness was completed in February 2024.
- The Chairs of the Audit & Governance and Scrutiny Committees submitted their Annual Reports to Full Council.
- The Authority complies with the Financial Management Transparency Code.
- Counter-fraud work continues to be completed with the retained expertise of in-house staff to investigate corporate fraud.
- Internal Audit completes an assessment of the risk of fraud which is reported to the Audit & Governance Committee annually. The counter fraud plan and risk assessment were reported to the Committee in October 2023 and it was concluded that the Authority has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks and commits to maintain its vigilance to tackle fraud.
- In compliance with the Localism Act 2011, a report was presented to Full Council in October 2020 advising them of the number of complaints received regarding Members Conduct. A report was not submitted during 2023/24 but this will be addressed in 2024/25.
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual report letter was reported to Audit & Governance Committee in October 2023.
- The review of the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation was approved by Council in December 2020. It is due to be refreshed in 2024/25.
- The Anti-Money Laundering Policy was reviewed and refreshed by the Audit & Governance Committee in October 2023 and a new Prevention of Tax Evasion Policy was approved by the Audit & Governance Committee in October 2020.
- The Diversity and Equality Scheme (2020-24) and supporting action plan remain in place with a new scheme being developed for implementation in January 2025.
- The annual pay policy as approved in March 2024.
- The authority has continued to progress implementations of the organisation's response to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The Data Protection Officer continues to raise awareness of GDPR across the authority. As part of wider IT Governance work, policies and procedures have been reviewed or are being developed to meet our obligations under the GDPR and to ensure a robust governance framework is in place for our ICT systems and information assets.
- The Information Security Policy and Data Protection Policy has been rolled out across the authority and is a mandatory requirement for new starters. The authority's Corporate Privacy Notice along with Departmental Fair Processing Notices have been developed with reviews being undertaken when necessary.
- Information on our website has been reviewed and updated with guidance to support our customers' rights of access to their data. Work is progressing with suppliers to ensure the security and compliance of personal data held within our software

systems. An ongoing programme of cyber security awareness and training is undertaken across the authority with regular signposted updates on Infozone.

- As part of the remit of the Audit & Governance Committee during 2023/24 a review of the risks around the Future High Street Fund Programme was undertaken. The sub-committee meets quarterly and reports directly to the Audit & Governance Committee.
- Partnership working arrangements continued to strengthen and further develop with both our statutory and community and voluntary sector partners through the re-institution of the Tamworth Strategic Partnership framework.
- The Tamworth Advice Centre continues to provide valuable generalist debt and specialist advice to our most vulnerable citizens and was successfully procured and awarded in April 2022 to Mid Mercia CAB by the partnership team.
- We value our community and voluntary sector and the work they do within our community. Our Community Grants and Councillor Grants Programme, now administered through the Community Foundation for Staffordshire, continue to provide valuable support to our community sector.
- The *Place Based Approach* continues to grow and further develop; this is a collaborative partnership approach through the County Council Building Resilient Families programme that uses multi skilled teams, universal services, voluntary sector organisations, and communities, at the right time, to improve outcomes for children, young people, vulnerable people and our community. As part of this *Place Based Approach* we have been working in partnership to identify community and voluntary sector organisations that can offer children, families and vulnerable people help and support at the earliest opportunity.
- Financial resilience is a key requirement for local authorities. In February 2023 the Council set budgets balanced over 3 years for the General Fund, and over 5 years for the HRA. There are challenges and pressures in the years ahead exacerbated by the uncertainty over the future of local government funding and potential business rates reset, but work has commenced to deliver longer term sustainability strategy. The 30 year HRA business plan was refreshed during 2023/24, and this also indicates significant resilience issues over the longer term. Approval was given for the creation of a HRA Business & Viability Planning Project within the Social Housing Regulatory Programme in February 2024 to start to address these issues.
- The Authority has a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care for children and adults with care and support needs across its services. We are committed to ensuring that all children and adults with care and support needs are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and/or provided by the Council. We do this by:
 - Having a Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk of Abuse & Neglect Policy and procedures in place
https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_docs/Safeguarding-children-and-adults-at-risk-of-abuse-and-neglect.pdf ;
 - Having Safeguarding Children & Adults Processes which give clear, step-by-step guidance if abuse is identified.
 - Safeguarding training programme in place for staff and members.
 - Carrying out of the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on staff and volunteers.
 - Working closely with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board & Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership; and Staffordshire Police.

- Working with the Staffordshire Prevent Board to ensure that the Council has due regard to the Prevent Duty, ensuring that young people and adults at risk of radicalisation are identified and supported.
- The Authority recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. In addition to the Authority's responsibility as an employer, it also acknowledges its duty as a Borough Council to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Authority is committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities and to ensuring that its supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking. The Authority has included modern slavery and human trafficking information within the corporate safeguarding policy and training.

A Modern Slavery statement is prepared each year and endorsed by Corporate Management Team and Audit and Governance Committee.

<https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/safeguarding>

The Council will continue to develop and strengthen its approach to modern slavery trafficking in 2023/24 and updated statement prepared by September 2024.

- The Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership continues to meet each week and the Council is also committed to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to ensure that partner organisations are working together to coordinate efforts to support high risk victims of domestic abuse, children, young people, families and vulnerable people across Tamworth.
- Tamworth launched a Social Housing Regulatory Programme in April 2023, building on a commissioned self-assessment of its regulatory compliance with the consumer standards for its stock retained services in 2021/2022. This assessment resulted in a risk based improvement plan, areas of which will be built into service plans for 2022-2025. The Programme oversight is championed by tenants and forms part of the Council's reporting on performance.

Declaration

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the Governance Framework by the Audit & Governance Committee and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose. The issues which remain outstanding from previous years' Annual Governance Statements are detailed at **Annex 1** with actions to address them. No additional governance issues were highlighted during 2023/24. Other minor issues highlighted through the assurance gathering process have been noted with planned actions to address these. Monitoring of the completion of all these issues will be completed through reporting to the Audit & Governance Committee.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address those matters raised to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operations as part of our next review.

Signed

C. Dean

S. Gabriel

Leader

Chief Executive

Date

On behalf of the Authority

Significant Governance Issues

The significant governance issues identified in relation to previous iterations of our Annual Governance Statement, which remained significant issues for us during 2023/24 are detailed below:

No	Issue	Previous Action	Update 2023/24
1	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)</p> <p>Whilst actions have been taken to ensure that the MTFS remains balanced, this is still a significant risk to the Authority. The Business Rate Reset and Fair Funding Review will directly affect levels of income over the coming years and pose a financial risk to the Authority. These have been planned for so far as possible within the MTFS. The increasing demands of our customers also need to be considered.</p>	<p>On 12 December 2022, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government published a written ministerial statement which was accompanied by a policy statement on the 2023/24 local government finance settlement and assumptions about the 2024/25 local government finance settlement.</p> <p>This statement came ahead of the 2023/24 provisional local government finance settlement announcement, which was published in December 2022, detailing local authority-level figures for 2023/24.</p> <p>The Government has set out some planning assumptions for the 2024/25 local government finance settlement as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review of Relative Needs and Resources ('Fair Funding Review') and a reset of Business Rates growth 	<p>On 5 February 24, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government published a written ministerial statement on the 2024/25 local government finance settlement. The one year settlement is reflected in the MTFS approved by Council on 27February 2024.</p> <p>The budget proposals included in the MTFS reflect the need to compensate for reduced income levels arising from the uncertain political and economic conditions and potential significant medium term reductions in Government funding. This is matched against a desire to continue to address the Council's priorities / issues identified by Members and at the same time to seek continuous improvement in service delivery.</p> <p>A number of uncertainties and risks remain with regard to local government funding, including the potential for a business rates reset, which may mean the Council losing its business rates</p>

		<p>will not be implemented in the next two years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council tax referendum principles will continue the same as 2023/24. • Revenue support grant will continue and be uplifted in line with baseline funding levels (assumed now to be now based on September 2023 CPI), while social care grants will increase as set out in the table above. • Business rates pooling will continue. • The Government will set out the future position of New Homes Bonus ahead of the 2024/25 local government finance settlement. <p>This settlement represents a ‘holding position’ until the next Parliament, aiming at stability. The ruling out of a business rates reset, or a fair funding review, means that the funding distribution will stay fairly stable (with the exception of Extended Provider Responsibility funding). But this means that the big questions about the future of the funding system remain unaddressed one way or another.</p> <p>While this means the Council will be able to retain its business rate growth for 2023/24 and 2024/25, it also means that the uncertainty continues and potentially the Council still faces losing this growth from 2025/26.</p> <p>There are also further uncertainties arising from current cost pressure and inflationary increases which have compounded the likely price increases for supplies that are required</p>	<p>growth; fairer funding review; and continuation of New Homes Bonus</p> <p>The development of a Sustainability Strategy is required in order to avoid significant financial cuts in future years. This will be developed alongside the Productivity Plan required as part of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement.</p> <p>The Plans will cover:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) transformation of services to make better use of resources; 2) opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design; 3) ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems, including specific consideration of expenditure on consultants and discredited staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes – this does not include programmes designed to promote integration and civic pride, and counter extremism; and 4) barriers preventing activity that the Government can help to reduce or remove. <p>The Productivity Plan will be developed alongside the Sustainability Strategy, and will give consideration to increasing income, reviewing services, and tackling persistent over and underspends with a view to becoming</p>
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		<p>for building or construction/maintenance works.</p> <p>The Recovery & Reset Programme package of savings originally reported in July 2022 estimated savings to be in the region of c£3.5m over 5 years; £2.8m of which was unbudgeted capital costs for continuing to occupy Marmion House.</p> <p>As part of the update report to Cabinet on 10 November 2022, including those already built into the medium-term financial plan, the revised programme potentially delivers efficiencies of c£5.1m over the next 5-year medium term. This includes the c£3.5m already identified; plus, an additional £1.6m already delivered through the service re-design project within the programme.</p> <p>In light of the base budget and MTFS forecast considered by Cabinet on 1 December 2022, following the Leaders Budget Workshop on 30 November 2022, Managers were asked to identify further areas for potential savings – which have now been included in the policy changes, amounting to c.£1.8m over 5 years.</p>	<p>financially sustainable over the medium term.</p> <p>These plans will be developed over the coming months and will be presented to Members in June 2024.</p>
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No	Issue	Previous Action	Update 2023/24
2	<p>Regeneration/Capital Projects</p> <p>The Authority needs to ensure that capital projects are managed effectively to ensure that they are delivered and grant monies are spent appropriately and timely.</p> <p>There is a risk that developers will not develop timely in accordance with the Local Plan need.</p>	<p>Re-profiling of capital scheme spend from 2022/23 into 2023/24 is forecast at c. £29.2m relating mainly to the Future High Street Fund Regeneration schemes of c.£17m together with Disabled Facilities Grants (£1.3m). There is also lower levels of re-profiling for new affordable Housing development (£3.4m) and housing capital works (£4.4m) including a Decarbonisation scheme (£1.1m).</p> <p>It is anticipated that this spend will now occur during 2023/24 but the situation will be closely monitored.</p> <p>As part of the MTFs, Council in February 2022 approved the updated Capital Strategy which sets out the Council's approach to capital investment and the approach that will be followed in making decisions in respect of the Council's Capital assets.</p> <p>Capital investment is an important ingredient in ensuring the Council's</p>	<p>Re-profiling of capital scheme spend from 2023/24 into 2024/25 is forecast at c. £30.15m relating mainly to the Future High Street Fund Regeneration schemes of c.£15m together with Gungate Development (£2m) and Disabled Facilities Grants (£1.7m). There is also a requirement for re-profiling for new affordable Housing development (£1m).</p> <p>It is anticipated that this spend will now occur during 2024/25 but the situation will be closely monitored.</p> <p>As part of the MTFs, Council in February 2023 approved the updated Capital Strategy which sets out the Council's approach to capital investment and the approach that will be followed in making decisions in respect of the Council's Capital assets.</p> <p>As part of the approved Strategy, the following action plan tasks have been implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A post implementation review is completed for each scheme where learning is identified which could assist future projects or where there is a significant financial or political impact; b) The Asset Strategy Steering Group meet on a quarterly basis to scrutinise the completed post implementation reports and review the

		<p>vision is achieved and given that capital resources are limited it is critical that the Council makes best use of these resources – including the development of a long term strategic plan to address the identified maintenance and repairs backlog for corporate assets.</p> <p>It is recognised that significant further work is required in this area in order to deliver a robust capital strategy, and the updated Asset Management Plan has been completed in draft following Scrutiny Committee consideration during the year, with an up-to-date stock condition survey. This sets out the detailed capital resources /expenditure required to maintain assets, together with the associated timeframe, to inform options appraisal and feed into the capital strategy for ASSG/CMT review of potential schemes.</p>	<p>management and monitoring of the capital programme with appropriate feedback and challenge – identifying improvements to the future management of the capital programme.</p>
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No	Issue	Previous Action	Update 2023/24
3	<p>Welfare & Benefit Reform</p> <p>There is a risk of reduced income corporately due to welfare reform changes (including council tax support scheme and Universal Credit with further austerity measures from the Welfare reform Act 2015). As well as the potential for reduced income and an increase in bad debts, there are additional impacts arising from increased needs in services – eg., homelessness, requirement for additional support to vulnerable people, increased issues of ASB etc. meaning an increase in demand on 3rd sector and statutory agency services.</p>	<p>Income levels have been largely maintained in 2022/23 (due to the mitigations put in place) despite the effects of the Covid-19 crisis and recent geopolitical issues.</p> <p>The Corporate Working Group has continued to meet to take forward an organisation wide approach including preparations for implementation of the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space). Following a tender process in 2021, further work was being commissioned around corporate debt to secure a one council approach focusing on not only the management of multiple debt households but seeking to understand how resources are better aligned to secure VFM.</p> <p>The work with the Voluntary Sector continues to thrive and baseline statistics have been produced through UK Share Prosperity Fund to understand the Council's approach and underpin projects around identified priority vulnerability areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Exclusion • Financial Exclusion 	<p>Income levels have been largely maintained in 2023/24 (due to the mitigations put in place) despite the effects of the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>Quarterly updates are presented to Cabinet as part of the performance report to monitor economic wellbeing and the impact on Council services including customer demand via monitoring of calls/contacts together with the financial impact of collection and demand for benefits and effect on income streams such as rent, council tax and business rates</p> <p>The Corporate Working Group has continued to meet to take forward an organisation wide approach including preparations for implementation of the Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space). Following a tender process in 2021, further work was being commissioned around corporate debt to secure a one council approach focusing on not only the management of multiple debt households but seeking to understand how resources are better aligned to secure VFM.</p> <p>The work with the Voluntary Sector continues to thrive and baseline statistics have been produced through UK Share Prosperity Fund to understand the Council's approach and underpin projects around identified priority vulnerability areas:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental Health• Digital Exclusion• Housing and Homelessness <p>The work also includes baseline to produce a Borough Wellbeing Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Exclusion• Financial Exclusion• Mental Health• Digital Exclusion• Housing and Homelessness <p>The work also includes baseline to produce a Borough Wellbeing Strategy.</p>
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TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2023/2024

Introduction

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

The International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) (the “International Framework”), states that:

To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entity’s objectives while acting in the public interest at all times.

Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.

Our Commitment

The Authority is committed to upholding the highest possible standards of good corporate governance, as good governance leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources, increased public involvement and trust in the Council and ultimately good results.

Good governance flows from shared values, culture and behaviour and from sound systems and structures. This Code of Corporate Governance is a public statement which sets out the framework through which the Council meets its commitment to good corporate governance and is based on the following principles;

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law.
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- Developing the entity’s capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

This Code describes how the Council demonstrates its commitment to these seven principles and indicates what the Council has completed to achieve the commitment. It shows our own governance structure underpinned by the principles and demonstrated how we operate effectively.

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

Supporting Principle	Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation.
What Assurance Do We Want	Codes of Conduct Individual sign off with regard to compliance with code Induction for new members and staff on standard of behaviours expected Performance appraisals
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>There is a Members’ Code of Conduct which forms part of the Constitution and is approved on an annual basis. Each member is required to sign two copies of the Code, retain one for themselves and one is held by Democratic Services. The Code of Conduct for employees is also in the Constitution. Members’ are required to sign up to the Code of Conduct at the time they are elected to office. The Code of Conduct for officers is issued to employees on an annual basis.</p> <p>There is a protocol for Member/Officer relations detailed in the Constitution.</p> <p>The Constitution details Rules of Procedures for Committee meetings. Codes and protocols are also included in the Gifts & Hospitality Policy and Register of Interests.</p> <p>Key Officers and Members are required to complete an annual disclosure regarding any related party interests as part of the annual statement of accounts process.</p> <p>There are a set of mandatory training requirements for all officers, which are delivered by either e-learning or face to face sessions.</p> <p>There is an officer code of conduct</p> <p>Members have at least one training event each year which relates to Conduct. They have access to the Monitoring Officer at all times.</p> <p>Other protocols included in the Constitution relate to Pre-Election, Member involvement in Commercial Transactions, use of Council facilities, printing and postage, Dealing with Planning Matters and Monitoring Officer Protocol.</p> <p>The Audit and Governance Committee remit includes review of Standards of Conduct for Members as required by the Localism Act 2011 – reports are produced to the Audit and Governance Committee.</p> <p>There is a Chief Officer conduct committee and a Statutory Officer conduct committee.</p> <p>Following endorsement at A&G a review of the Code of Conduct was undertaken and due before Full Council 2024.</p> <p>There is an E-induction programme in place which all new members of staff must complete.</p>

	<p>A members' induction programme is in place for newly elected members.</p> <p>A new personal development review process commenced in May 2023, which incorporates an assessment of employees core values and behaviours.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).
What Assurance Do We Want	Communicating shared values with members, staff, the community and partners.
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Members Code of Conduct is built upon the Seven Principles of Public Life. The Code of Conduct is included in the Constitution. Following endorsement at A&G a review of the Code of Conduct was undertaken and due before Full Council 2024. (08/10/21) The Corporate Plan was revised during 2021/22 and a new plan for the period from 2022 to 2025 was approved at Cabinet on 17 March 2022.</p> <p>This work has all been brought together by councillors, during a number of councillor-led workshops and seminars, into a new refocused vision to reflect new priorities. Again, this year collaborative budget setting workshops were held to ensure all councillors were able to have involvement in what is important to them and their residents. Our desired outcomes for 2022-25 are detailed in the Corporate Plan and Council Vision. The Corporate Plan details our Vision and sets out our Thematic Priorities. Under each thematic priority, we detail our ambitions and how we are going to realise these. All outcomes we aim to achieve, along with changes we want to see and supporting information are detailed in the Corporate Plan. It is through the Corporate Plan that these aspirations and expectations will be achieved. The scale, scope and timescale relating to these outcomes presents the Council with a challenging yet achievable task over the forthcoming years. While the Corporate Plan remains relevant to our future outcomes, these will no doubt be affected by both the ongoing effects of other geopolitical situations and the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>It is important to note that whilst the plan focuses upon delivering against the Thematic Priorities, the Council must also ensure that the wide range of day-to-day operational and support services continue to be delivered to a consistent and efficient standard. In doing so, it demonstrates how the organisation underpins our Thematic Priorities.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan identifies that we will prioritise the development of clear standards of service across the organisation and will further develop our approaches to measure and respond quickly to customer intelligence and levels of satisfaction together with the revision of the Organisational and People Strategy that ensures the organisation is focused on the future.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions.
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Decision making practices</p> <p>Declaration of interests made at meetings</p> <p>Conduct at meetings</p> <p>Shared values guide decision making</p> <p>Develop and maintain an effective standards committee</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Rules of procedure for Committee meetings detailed in the Constitution. Report format set out to ensure key information is provided to Members to inform decision making.</p> <p>Declarations of interests completed at all Committee meetings and recorded on the website. Annual declarations made by members – register of Interests. Nolan principles (values) detailed with the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Audit & Governance Committee takes on the role of Standards Committee and independent members sit on the Committee for Standards matters.</p> <p>Monitoring Officer dedicated to member issues with early intervention and resolution practised leading to good Member/Officer relationships.</p> <p>The Council's commitment to equality and diversity is demonstrated in its policy and plan (2020-24).</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Anti-fraud and corruption policies are working effectively</p> <p>Up-to-date register of interests (members and staff)</p> <p>Up-to-date register of gifts and hospitality</p> <p>Whistleblowing policies are in place and protect individuals raising concerns</p> <p>Whistleblowing policy has been made available to members of the public, employees, partners and contractors</p> <p>Complaints policy and examples of responding to complaints about behaviour</p> <p>Changes/improvements as a result of complaints received and acted upon</p> <p>Members and officers code of conduct refers to a requirement to declare interests</p> <p>Minutes show declarations of interest were sought and appropriate declarations made.</p> <p>As part of our approach to service delivery we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve our use of ‘insight’ in shaping services and directing investment; • Put the customer at the heart of our decisions and seek to better meet needs whilst reducing costs. • Better align service delivery to ensure we act with purpose and are accountable; • Develop approaches which genuinely ‘empower’ individuals and communities; • Support a transformed dialogue with residents - recognising that our financial capacity will be less than in previous years which means educating and supporting communities to focus resources on ‘needs’ and being clear on what we are able to do and equally what we can’t.
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement, Strategy & Guidance Notes are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. They are approved by the Audit & Governance Committee. The Policy is made available on the intranet and promoted to all staff via annual fraud awareness campaigns. One was held in November 2021.</p> <p>All staff and members are required to register their interests.</p> <p>Members interests are made public on the website.</p> <p>Gifts and hospitality register is maintained by the Monitoring Officer. Regular reminders are sent to Members and Officers on the requirement to Register Gifts & Hospitality, the last one being sent in December 2019.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Policy is reviewed and updated on a regular basis and made available on the intranet.</p> <p>The Comments, Compliments and Complaints policy was approved by Cabinet in February 2023 and is available on the website. The policy provides a framework that enables customers to give feedback about the council’s services and to ensure fairness and consistency when acting on this feedback.</p> <p>Codes of Conduct require members and officer to declare interests.</p> <p>Committee meeting minutes detail declarations made.</p>

	<p>Ombudsman Investigations are reported to Audit & Governance Committee.</p> <p>There is an Anti-Money Laundering Policy in place that was reviewed and approved in November 2019 by the Audit & Governance Committee.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Scrutiny of ethical decision making</p> <p>Championing ethical compliance at governing body level</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Council has in place three Scrutiny Committees – Corporate, Health & Wellbeing and Infrastructure, Safety & Growth which provide effective scrutiny to the achievement of the strategic priorities. The Scrutiny Committees join together to scrutinise the Budget.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Committees have the right to “call in” decisions made by the Executive. The Scrutiny Committees make use of the Forward Plan to shape projects and improve accountability and decision making. The Scrutiny Committee function is currently being reviewed for effectiveness by the Constitution Working Group.</p> <p>Agendas and minutes for the Scrutiny Committees are made available on the Council's website and reported to the Full Council.</p> <p>Each Chair of the Scrutiny Committee reports annually to Full Council.</p> <p>The role of scrutiny has been enhanced with their monitoring and scrutiny of organisational performance on a regular basis. Training will continue as required for members to improve effectiveness</p> <p>There is an Audit and Governance Committee with the roles as required by the CIPFA/Solace framework (as well as the Standards function).</p> <p>A Constitution Working Group, made up of cross party representatives, meets to review the Constitution. The Deputy leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Assets & Finance is the Governance lead in the Authority.</p> <p>Corporate Values and Behaviours have been rolled out to staff.</p> <p>Every report, strategy and policy must have an associated community impact assessment</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation
What Assurance Do We Want	Provision of ethical awareness training
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Members receive induction training which covers expected behaviours and ethics. Complaints received about Members Conduct are administered by the Monitoring Officer. Following the Localism Act, the Standards Committee has been abolished. Issues in relation to Members Standards of Conduct are now operated in terms of the Localism Act 2011. A procedure approved by Council is in place which outlines the process to be followed in relation to complaints of members conduct. It also provides the procedure for complaints that are to be dealt with by the Audit & Governance Committee. A recruitment process is planned shortly to recruit further Independent Members.</p> <p>Training is provided on a regular basis for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Equalities (MERIT); • Safeguarding; • Data Protection • Freedom of Information • Health and Safety.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.
What Assurance Do We Want	Appraisal processes take account of values and ethical behaviour Staff appointments policy Procurement policy
What Assurance DoWe Get	<p>PDR's take into account corporate priorities. The PDR process identifies training needs required by the officer for continued professional development and in order to deliver the vision and priorities of the Authority. New and vacant post procedure in place.</p> <p>Recruitment processes are carried out by trained officers in line with the recruitment and selection policy. Procurement Policy in place which requires compliance standards that apply to procurement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with National legislation; all procurement will be undertaken in accordance with UK statutes and regulations; • Financial regulations external and internal; all procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations; • Health & Safety standards; • Environmental Impact and Sustainability; the Council will aim to procure from suppliers and to use goods and services which have the least impact on the environment and minimise energy consumption whilst maintaining quality and value for money; • Equality and Diversity – the Council is committed to eliminating inequalities in all areas of activity including procurement, and the procurement process will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexuality; • Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk of Abuse & Neglect standards. • Under the provisions of the Social Value Act, officers are required to consider social value issues in the procurement of major works or services i.e. impact on local labour, local economy/businesses, apprenticeships etc. <p>Under the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, suitability questionnaires for tenderers need to be completed to ensure that the commercial organisations confirm that they are compliant with the annual reporting requirements contained with Section 54 (transparency in supply chains etc.) of the Act. The Council publishes a Modern Slavery Statement every year</p>
What is missing	

Supporting Principle	Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the organisation.
What Assurance Do We Want	Agreed values in partnership working: - Statement of business ethics communicates commitment to ethical values to external suppliers Ethical values feature in contracts with external service providers. Protocols for partnership working
What Assurance Do We Get	Conditions of contract for provision of service details bribery and corruption. This is available on the website Partnership arrangements in place, designed to help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all partnerships have good systems of governance. The Seven Principles of Public Life are detailed within the Counter Fraud & Corruption Policy Statement, Strategy & Guidance Notes . They are also detailed in the Members Code of Conduct.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.
What Assurance Do We Want	Statutory provisions Statutory guidance is followed Constitution
What Assurance Do We Get	The Authority receives legal advice via the shared Legal Service of Lichfield District, South Staffordshire District and Tamworth Borough Councils. This shared arrangement was implemented during 2019/20. Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer roles in place – review key decisions for legal and financial compliance. Legal updates from officers regarding changes to legislation, regulations, codes of practice, etc. are provided. Statutory guidance is followed by all services. The Constitution , which includes the Scheme of Delegation to Officers is reviewed and approved annually by Full Council. Any substantial amendments required are approved by the Full Council. Quarterly ‘statutory officers’ meetings are held with the Chief Executive. HR policies fully comply with employment legislation.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
What Assurance Do We Want	Job descriptions/specifications Compliance with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (2015) Terms of reference Committee support
What Assurance Do We Get	Job descriptions, job profiles and personal specifications in place Compliance with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government Statutory officers terms of reference detailed with the Constitution Democratic support provided for Committee including a Scrutiny Officer to support Members.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other Stakeholders
What Assurance Do We Want	Record of legal advice provided by officers
What Assurance Do We get	Details of legal advice provided to officers is maintained where appropriate and an electronic file created. Officers have the relevant training in their service sector appropriate to their position to ensure advice provided to citizens is correct, relevant and accurate. Committee reports require legal implications to be identified as part of the decision making process. All Cabinet Reports are approved by the Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively
What Assurance Do We Want	Monitoring officer provisions Record of legal advice provided by officers Statutory provisions
What Assurance Do We Get	Officers receive legal advice as required from the shared legal services arrangement. There is a designated Monitoring Officer for member issues. Committee reports require legal implications to be identified as part of the decision making process. Statutory provisions are followed and preserved.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.
What Assurance Do We Want	Effective anti-fraud and corruption policies and procedures
What Assurance Do We Get	The Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement, Strategy and & Guidance Notes are reviewed and updated on a regular basis and approved by the Audit & Governance Committee . The document is made available on the Authority's website and the Intranet and is promoted to staff. The Whistleblowing Policy is approved on an annual basis by the Audit & Governance Committee and made available on the Authority's website and the intranet. Assistant Directors are required to complete annual assurance statements to confirm compliance or otherwise with laid down expected principles and policy.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting Principle	Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness
What Assurance Do We Want	Annual report Freedom of Information Act publication scheme Online council tax information Authority's goals and values Authority website
What Assurance Do We Get	The Corporate Plan is published on the website There is a publication scheme in place. FOI disclosures are recorded on the website. On-line Council Tax information is made available – as well as published financial information in line with the Transparency Code of Practice (Accounts, budget, pay Policy etc.) The Authority's goals and values are detailed in the performance information and Corporate Plan . The vision and associated priorities was driven by Members and based upon the collection, collation and analysis of a range of information; an understanding of local issues and an awareness of key influences. Each service area develops a business plan with outcomes, and performance indicators linked to the vision and priorities. The website is fully functional and has available information to aid citizens.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided.
What Assurance Do We Want	Record of decision making and supporting materials
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Forward Plan is maintained for all key decisions and follows the access to information rules and regulations regarding publication and notice.</p> <p>All agenda items (reports) are made available on the website 5 working days prior to the meeting. Minutes are published on the website.</p> <p>All reports identify restrictions on publication.</p> <p>An Annual Report from the Leader of the Council detailing any reports that have not met the required notice is made in accordance with the Access to Information Regulations.</p> <p>The budget process aims to be open and transparent with an initial Process Plan approved in July, detailed base budget in November and Policy changes to arrive at the following year's budget approved in February.</p> <p>Appropriate action is taken and relevant Notices published in terms of the access to information rules and regulations when urgent items and private items are considered.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rational and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.
What Assurance Do We Want	Decision making protocols Report pro-formas Record of professional advice in reaching decisions Meeting reports show detail of advice given Discussions between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making Agreement on the information that will be provided and timescales Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports is adhered to
What Assurance Do We Get	All decisions are made in accordance with the protocol as per the Constitution. Report formats are set on ModGov including key information to make informed decisions. The report author is noted on the report. Cabinet reports require Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer sign off. Portfolio holders / Cabinet are required to sign off the reports before publication / consideration – following discussions / agreement. A Forward Plan is produced detailing the key decisions that will be made over the following one to four months. The forward plan is published on a regular basis and at least monthly. A calendar of meetings is published annually. All Agendas and Minutes of meetings are published in accordance with statutory requirements.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/course of action.
What Assurance Do We Want	Use of consultation feedback
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Council has invested strongly in the development of innovative and proactive collaboration across agencies and sectors and has a well-earned reputation for placing partnership at the heart of our approach. The approved Corporate Plan 2022-2025 contains a commitment that we consider that our ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents is enhanced by working with others and as a result we will continue to invest in the development of purposeful and meaningful partnerships, based on identified priority need. In particular we will focus on enhancing the work that we do with others to protect vulnerable people and enhance neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Various consultations exercises are completed throughout the year. Details of the consultations are made available on the website and the results are published.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>The Tenant Involvement Strategy (2020-24) remains in place and various forms of tenant involvement takes place throughout the year. This is currently subject to review as part of the Social Housing Regulatory Programme to review all council stock retained services for its council housing.</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement in place for the Local Plan and Development Management Service. There is a Community Safety Website for the Community Safety Partnership.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably
What Assurance Do We Want	Communication strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Tenant Involvement Strategy (2020-24) in place in Housing. This is subject to review as part of the new regulatory standards for transparency, influence and accountability – its principal driver to put tenants at the heart of decision making</p> <p>The approved Corporate Plan 2022-2025 contains a commitment for the development of a Communication Strategy that will set out how we communicate with our local residents and other audiences. The principle purpose of this strategy is to support the Corporate Plan and to set out how, when and by which mechanism we communicate with our residents.</p> <p>Partnership Policy and Guidance</p> <p>The Council has invested strongly in the development of innovative and proactive collaboration across agencies and sectors and has a well-earned reputation for placing partnership at the heart of our approach. A revised Partnership Policy and Guidance has been prepared. We consider that our ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents is enhanced by working with others and as a result we will continue to invest in the development of purposeful and meaningful partnerships identifying priority need. In particular we will focus on enhancing the work that we do with others to protect vulnerable people and enhance neighbourhoods.</p>
What is missing	Communication Strategy

Supporting Principle	Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.
What Assurance Do We Want	Database of stakeholders with whom the authority should engage and for what purpose and a record of an assessment of the effectiveness of any changes.
What Assurance Do We Get	Partnership Policy and Guidance has recently been updated to allow staff and Members to understand partnerships, formal and informal and to record them to identify robust terms of reference, outcomes, risks and exit strategies.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring that partnerships are based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust - A shared commitment to change - A culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners - And that the added value of partnership working is explicit
What Assurance Do We Want	Partnership framework Partnership protocols
What Assurance Do We Get	Memorandum of Understanding in place with Lichfield District Council for the provision of shared services. Local Enterprise Partnership. Combined Authority. Partnership Policy and Guidance has recently been updated to allow staff and Members to understand partnerships, formal and informal and to record them to identify robust terms of reference, outcomes, risks and exit strategies
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes
What Assurance Do We Want	Record of public consultations Partnership framework
What Assurance Do We Get	Results of Public consultations are made available on the website. Partnership Policy and guidance is in place and the Council has invested strongly in the development of innovative and proactive collaboration across agencies and sectors and has a well-earned reputation for placing partnership at the heart of our approach. We consider that our ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents is enhanced by working with others and as a result we will continue to invest in the development of purposeful and meaningful partnerships. In particular we will focus on enhancing the work that we do with others to protect vulnerable people and enhance neighbourhoods. A Community Safety Plan 2023-2026 is in place
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement
What Assurance Do We Want	Communications strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Various consultations exercises are completed throughout the year. Details of the consultations are made available on the website and the results are published.</p> <p>One of the approved Corporate Priorities is to work collaboratively and flexible to meet the needs of our communities.</p> <p>Partnership Policy and guidance in place.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities.</p> <p>We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>A new Customer Service strategy is being developed to support the move to more efficient ways of working and a more accelerated move to digitalisation. The strategy will set out our vision to achieve the best possible experience for our customers.</p> <p>Socialmedia channels are being used to encourage more participation.</p> <p>There is a Tenant Involvement Strategy in place and various forms of tenant involvement takes place throughout the year.</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement in place for the Local Plan and Development Management Service.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.
What Assurance Do We Want	Communications strategy Joint strategic needs assessment
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Various consultation exercises are completed throughout the year. Details of the consultations are made available on the website and the results are published.</p> <p>Citizens panel in place.</p> <p>The Council has invested strongly in the development of innovative and proactive collaboration across agencies and sectors and has a well-earned reputation for placing partnership at the heart of our approach. The approved Corporate Plan 2022-2025 contains a commitment that we consider that our ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents is enhanced by working with others and as a result we will continue to invest in the development of purposeful and meaningful partnerships. In particular we will focus on enhancing the work that we do with others to protect vulnerable people and enhance neighbourhoods.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>For council housing, the landlord regulatory framework, has a constituted tenant consultative group which seeks to inform, scrutinise and support performance across all of the councils housing services. This is subject to review as part of the Councils Social housing regulatory programme, Statement of Community Involvement in place for the Local Plan</p>

What is missing

Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account
What Assurance Do We Want	Communications strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Council has invested strongly in the development of innovative and proactive collaboration across agencies and sectors and has a well-earned reputation for placing partnership at the heart of our approach. The approved Corporate Plan 2022-2025 contains a commitment that we consider that our ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents is enhanced by working with others and as a result we will continue to invest in the development of purposeful and meaningful partnerships. In particular we will focus on enhancing the work that we do with others to protect vulnerable people and enhance neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Various consultations exercises are completed throughout the year. Details of the consultations are made available on the website and the results are published.</p> <p>Citizens panel in place.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>The results of this survey are reported to Cabinet and feed into the State of Tamworth Debate. A new Customer Service strategy is being developed to support the move to more efficient ways of working and a more accelerated move to digitisation. The strategy will set our vision to achieve the best possible experience for our customers.</p> <p>Social media channels as well as digital services are being used to encourage more participation. There is a Tenant Involvement Strategy in place and various forms of tenant involvement takes place throughout the year.</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement in place for the Local Plan and Development Management Service</p>

What is missing

Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity
What Assurance Do We Want	Processes for dealing with competing demands within the community, for example a consultation
What Assurance Do We Get	Promotion of the consultation exercise is completed through press releases, active promotion on the website, and through social media. In addition an annual residents survey is carried out and feeds in to the State of Tamworth debate.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Taking accounts of the interests of future generations of tax payers and service users
What Assurance Do We Want	Reports Joint strategic needs assessment
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Citizens panel in place.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>A new Customer Service strategy is being developed to support the move to more efficient ways of working and a more accelerated move to digitisation. The strategy will set our vision to achieve the best possible experience for our customers.</p> <p>The Council is working closely with partners as part of the Children, Families and Vulnerable People review to share and analyse key data with the aim to develop shared priorities for the development of Early Help approaches.</p>

What is missing

Nothing identified

Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Supporting Principle	Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators which provides the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions
What Assurance Do We Want	Vision used as a basis for corporate and service planning
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Corporate Plan was revised during 2021/22 and a new plan for the period from 2022 to 2025 was approved at Cabinet on 17 March 2022.</p> <p>This work was brought together by councillors, during a number of councillor-led workshops and seminars, into a new refocused vision to reflect new priorities. Again, this year collaborative budget setting workshops were held to ensure all councillors were able to have involvement in what is important to them and their residents. Our desired outcomes for 2022-25 are detailed in the Corporate Plan and Council Vision. The Corporate Plan details our Vision and sets out our Thematic Priorities. Under each thematic priority, we detail our ambitions and how we are going to realise these. All outcomes we aim to achieve, along with changes we want to see and supporting information are detailed in the Corporate Plan, it is through the Corporate Plan 2022-2025 that these aspirations and expectations are being achieved. The scale, scope and timescale relating to these outcomes presents the Council with a challenging yet achievable task over the forthcoming years, particularly now in light of the challenges posed by cost of living crisis.</p> <p>It is important to note that whilst the plan focuses upon delivering against the Thematic Priorities, the Council must also ensure that the wide range of day-to-day operational and support services continue to be delivered to a consistent and efficient standard. In doing so, it demonstrates how the organisation both connects and underpins the Thematic Priorities.</p> <p>The Authority continues to work with others by using alternative delivery models for service provision. A Memorandum of Understanding has been adopted with Lichfield District Council to replace an existing informal arrangement for options of pursuing shared service arrangement with each other.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year</p>

we've combined these into one annual survey.

In the survey we asked questions about:

- What Tamworth is like as a place to live.
- Satisfaction with council services.
- How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council.
- Thoughts on council priorities.
- Council income and spending options.
- How we handle complaints.

There are dedicated [Business Advice](#) and [Visit Tamworth](#) websites.

In terms of the Councils own housing stock and in compliance with the regulatory framework members have endorsed a Social Housing Regulatory Programme which is informed by a self-assessment against the RSH standards. Tenant involvement and engagement is crucial to this and will be updated. The landlord regulatory framework sets out how tenants inform, scrutinise and develop services. The tenant Consultative group are constituted and their views are incorporated in to the Council's decision making through references in reports. The Council presents an annual report for tenants to Cabinet detailing compliance with consumer standards and reference to benchmarked HRA activity. This is evidenced through the Tenant Involvement and Consultation Strategy which gives examples of where tenants' have been consulted regarding the decisions which affect the management and maintenance of their homes, for example, Tenants were consulted as part of the development of the new Housing Allocations Policy. As part of the Tenant participation, there are formal groups for [Tenant Consultation](#) and Tenant Involvement and several informal groups in place. [Open House](#) is now communicated by way of an e-newsletter on a bi-monthly basis. It is still advertised on our website and will be available on request as a hard copy. A small number of hard copies will be made available in prominent places i.e. reception/TIC etc. and a small number delivered to the 11 Housing Sheltered schemes around the Borough.

The Tamworth Strategic Partnership (TSP) is currently under review but aims to bring together key local agencies from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

There is a Tamworth Health and Wellbeing Partnership in place to ensure that health inequalities data is shared and understood when policies are produced, linking to the JSNA.

The Authority produces an Annual Review and [Corporate Plan](#). Performance against the Corporate Plan is reported on a quarterly basis. The [Statement of Accounts](#) and the [Auditors Annual Report](#) are made available on the website.

Council, on 27th February 2024, approved a 3 year Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund

with a Council Tax increase of 2.95% for the year – in order to continue to deliver those services essential to the Local Community.

With regard to the Housing Revenue Account, a 5 year MTFS was approved by Council including significant investment in housing development projects to meet future housing needs and sustain the HRA in the longer term.

On 5th February 2024, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government published a written ministerial statement on the 2024/25 local government finance settlement. The one year settlement is reflected in the MTFS.

The ruling out of a business rates reset, or a fair funding review, in the near term means that the funding distribution will stay fairly stable (with the exception of Extended Provider Responsibility funding). But this means that the big questions about the future of the funding system remain unaddressed one way or another.

While this means the Council is able to retain its business rate growth for 2023/24 and 2024/25, it also means that the uncertainty continues and potentially the Council still faces losing this growth from 2026/27. Members will face difficult decisions around prioritising services, when faced with significant reductions in funding.

There are also further uncertainties arising from current cost pressure and inflationary increases which have compounded price increases for supplies that are required for building or construction/maintenance works.

The Council remains committed to promoting and stimulating economic growth and regeneration; meeting our housing needs; creating a vibrant town centre economy and protecting those most vulnerable in our communities. The Council is responding to these challenges by considering the opportunities to make further savings and /or grow our income. We are ambitious with our commercial view and will continue to work hard to identify income streams that enable us to continue to meet the needs of our residents.

More than ever, we recognise that our financial capacity will be less than in previous years which means that we will need to maintain our approach to innovation, collaboration and transformation. So, not only will the Council seek investment from businesses and developers, but the Council itself will explore viable and sustainable investment opportunities using all returns to support public services.

We continue to invest in our teams, transform our processes and ensure our technology infrastructure is fit for purpose. We have identified a number of opportunities to improve customer access to information and services as well as our engagement with our citizens and the way in which we manage our data and information.

Our Digital Development Plan project continues to review processes and demand, with the aim of re-designing processes to meet changing customer expectations and making the best use of technology to deliver efficient and effective services to the customer, including self-service and increased digital

	<p>functionality.</p> <p>This approach will change the organisation and how it works; will require Members to put evidence and insight at the heart of our decision making to ensure that we are transparent about the rationale for our decisions and plans; will involve managed risks and will sustain essential services critical in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities at a time when demand is increasing and resources reducing.</p> <p>Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet review the most up-to-date budget forecasts on a quarterly basis, and discuss the delivery of the planned savings to support our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Community engagement and involvement</p> <p>Corporate and service plans</p> <p>Community strategy</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	The Authority produces a Corporate Plan . Performance against the Corporate Plan is reported on a quarterly basis. The Statement of Accounts and the Auditors Annual Report are made available on the website. Corporate and service plans are reviewed and updated annually. They include actions to be completed
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available
What Assurance Do We Want	Regular reports on progress
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The quarterly performance report details performance indicators, collections rates, an update on the sustainability strategy, progress against the corporate plan and the corporate risk register. The performance report is reported quarterly to Cabinet.</p> <p>The Authority has in place a Comments, Compliments and Complaints policy which provides a framework that enables customers to give feedback about the Council's services and to ensure consistency and fairness when acting on this feedback. This can either be in the form of comments, compliments or complaints.</p> <p>The policy and complaint responses give guidance on referrals to the Ombudsman. Guidance is made available to members of the public if they wish to make a complaint against a member of the Council. Complaints against members of the Council are dealt with by the Monitoring Officer in the first instance and ultimately reported to the Audit & Governance Committee.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Performance trends are established and reported upon</p> <p>Risk management protocols</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Performance trends are reported in the quarterly performance report.</p> <p>Risks are identified at a corporate and operational level and are monitored on a regular basis in line with the Risk Management Policy. The Corporate Risk Register is reported to the Audit & Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>A review of the approach to risk management has been completed and implementation is underway.</p> <p>The annual audit plan is developed around the audit risk assessment and through consultation with members of the Corporate Management Team who identify emerging risks within their service areas.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Managing service users expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available
What Assurance Do We Want	An agreed set of quality standard measures for each service element and included in service plans Processes for dealing with competing demands within the community
What Assurance Do We Get	Each service plan has actions plans and performance indicators. Corporate plan actions aligned to the strategic priorities have action plans in place which are updated on a quarterly basis. The council has implemented a Demand Management model which aims to eliminate waste in processes. The Quarterly Performance Report is reviewed by Corporate Scrutiny each quarter prior to being approved by Cabinet. Ensuring that residents are able to easily access clear information about the standards of service they can expect from us will greatly help to reduce waste demand and promote confidence in the Council. Of equal importance is ensuring that the right tools are in place to deliver consistently to the expected standard. The Corporate Plan 2022-2025 identifies that we will prioritise the development of clear standards of service across the organisation and will further develop our approaches to measure and respond quickly to customer intelligence and levels of satisfaction.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision
What Assurance Do We Want	Capital investment is structured to achieve appropriate life spans and adaptability for future use or that resources (e.g. land) are spent on optimising social, economic and environmental wellbeing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capital programme - Capital investment strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	There is a 3 year capital programme in place (as detailed in the MTFs and budget book) which identifies capital spend and financing. The Capital Investment Strategy, Capital process guidance, full capital appraisal forms and outline capital bid forms are available on the intranet. Business plans are informed by Corporate Plan and take into account PEST impacts. A longer term Capital Strategy has been prepared which sets out the Council's approach to capital investment and the approach that will be followed in making decisions in respect of the Council's Capital assets including an action plan for the development of a longer term approach to capital and asset management.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.
What Assurance Do We Want	Discussion between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making Record of decision making and support materials
What Assurance Do We Get	Full reports are prepared by officers and members. Portfolio Holders can discuss any issues prior to the committee meeting with the relevant officer. The Council publishes a Forward Plan which provides detail of all upcoming key decisions. Scrutiny Committees are encouraged to utilise the Forward Plan to inform their decision making process and can Call
	In any decisions for further scrutiny. All agenda items and minutes are available on the website with the exception of restricted agenda items. The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meeting and Access to Information) Regulations 2012 requires that the Leader of the Council makes one report annually to the authority to include particulars of each urgent executive decisions made and a summary of matters in respect of which each decision was made. Resource and Legal/Risk implications are identified in Committee reports
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Determining the wider public interest associated with balance conflicting interests between achieving the various economic. Social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs.
What Assurance Do We Want	Record of decision making and supporting materials Protocols for consultation
What Assurance Do We Get	All Committee decisions are recorded in the minutes. Minutes and agendas are made available on the website. Where Officers have made decisions which require approval by Portfolio holders, these are made available on the website. All consultation undertaken is made available on the website so that citizens can participate. Annual Survey including budget consultation approved annually by Cabinet. Community Impact Assessments completed for all strategies, policies and procedures Equality and Diversity Scheme and supporting action plan.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring fair access to services
What Assurance Do We Want	Protocols ensure fair access and statutory guidance is followed.
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Equalities assessments are undertaken at each policy review</p> <p>Website accessibility – is W3C1.0 compliance (standard) with the ability to change font sizes, or use alternative formats and languages.</p> <p>Hard copies of Committee agendas are made available on request. A hardcopy of each agenda was taken to each Committee meeting for public use.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

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

Supporting Principle	Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided.
What Assurance Do We Want	Discussion between member and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making Decision making protocols Options appraisals Agreement of information that will be provided and timescales
What Assurance Do We Get	Leadership team meetings between members and officers are in place. Regular update meetings are held between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, and relevant Chief officers and their Portfolio holders. The Constitution details the decision making protocols and format of reports. Various options are required to be detailed in the Committee reports so that members can make informed decisions. There is a set timetable in place for the production of agendas prior to the meeting taking place. Scrutiny Officer in place to support the Scrutiny function.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.
What Assurance Do We Want	Financial strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Annual Survey including budget consultation is completed on an annual basis with citizen input which informs the financial strategy. To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>MTFS approved annually takes into account budget consultation feedback – reported annually to Cabinet.</p> <p>In addition the Tenant Consultative Group are regularly consulted on service improvements for council tenants and voluntary sector organisations were able to ask questions of the Leader.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets
What Assurance Do We Want	Calendar of dates for developing and submitting plans and reports that are adhered to
What Assurance Do We Get	There is a performance management reporting cycle in place which timetables the performance reporting cycle. The Forward Plan is published on the website detailing the expected agenda items for the following four months.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered
What Assurance Do We Want	Communication strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>The survey results are fed into the State of Tamworth debate.</p> <p>Joint Scrutiny Committee (Budget) held annually to feedback Member concerns from residents.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan 2022-2025 contains a commitment for the development of a Communication Strategy that will set out how we communicate with our local residents and other audiences. The principal purpose of this strategy is to support the Corporate Plan by ensuring communications are at the heart of all council activity. The Council has invested strongly in the development of innovative and proactive collaboration across agencies and sectors and has a well-earned reputation for placing partnership at the heart of our approach. We consider that our ability to deliver positive outcomes for residents is enhanced by working with others and as a result we will continue to invest in the development of purposeful and meaningful partnerships. In particular we will focus on enhancing the work that we do with others to protect vulnerable people and enhance neighbourhoods.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks
What Assurance Do We Want	Partnership framework Risk management protocol
What Assurance Do We Get	Partnerships risks are identified and monitored through the Partnership Policy and guidance – risk registers are in place and being reviewed. Partnership arrangements in place designed to help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all partnerships have good systems of governance. Risks are identified at a corporate and operational level and are monitored on a regular basis in line with the Risk Management Policy. The Corporate Risk Register is reported to the Audit & Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances
What Assurance Do We Want	Planning protocols
What Assurance Do We Get	Protocols in place (constitution) to ensure annual delivery of: 1) MTFS; 2) Annual Survey including Budget Consultation; 3) 4) State of Tamworth debate; 5) KPIs / Service Plans; 6) Corporate Plan. The Quarterly Performance Report is reviewed by Corporate Scrutiny each quarter prior to being approved by Cabinet.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured
What Assurance Do We Want	KPIs have been established and approved for each service element and included in the service plan and are reported upon regularly
What Assurance Do We Get	Key performance indicators are in place within Service Plans and the Corporate Plan and monitored and reported on a regular basis through quarterly reports to Cabinet.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly
What Assurance Do We Want	Reports include detailed performance results and highlights areas where corrective action is necessary
What Assurance Do We Get	A quarterly performance report is reported to Cabinet following consideration by corporate scrutiny. The report details progress against performance indicators with a red, amber, green traffic light scenario to prompt remedial actions.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the Medium Term Financial Strategy
What Assurance Do We Want	Evidence that budgets, plans and objectives are aligned
What Assurance Do We Get	Budgets are set following budget consultation with citizens which is now carried out as part of the annual residents survey. Budgets are aligned to the corporate objectivesA joint report is approved annually by Council which approves the Vision, Corporate Priorities and Medium Term Financial Strategy aligning resource demands in support of the corporate priorities.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenues and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.
What Assurance Do We Want	Budget guidance and protocols Medium term financial plan Corporate plans
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Council, on 27th February 2023, approved a 3 year Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund with a Council Tax increase of 2.95% for the year – in order to continue to deliver those services essential to the Local Community.</p> <p>With regard to the Housing Revenue Account, a 5 year MTFS was approved by Council including significant investment in housing development projects to meet future housing needs and sustain the HRA in the longer term.</p> <p>On 5th February 2024, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government published a written ministerial statement on the 2024/25 local government finance settlement. The one year settlement is reflected in the MTFS.</p> <p>The ruling out of a business rates reset, or a fair funding review in the near term means that the funding distribution will stay fairly stable (with the exception of Extended Provider Responsibility funding). But this means that the big questions about the future of the funding system remain unaddressed one way or another.</p> <p>While this means the Council will be able to retain its business rate growth for 2023/24 and 2024/25, it also means that the uncertainty continues and potentially the Council still faces losing this growth from 2026/27.</p> <p>Members will face difficult decisions around prioritising services, when faced with significant reductions in funding.</p> <p>There are also further uncertainties arising from current cost pressure and inflationary increases which have compounded price increases for supplies that are required for building or construction/maintenance works.</p>

	<p>The Council remains committed to promoting and stimulating economic growth and regeneration; meeting our housing needs; creating a vibrant town centre economy and protecting those most vulnerable in our communities. The Council is responding to these challenges by considering the opportunities to make further savings and /or grow our income. We are ambitious with our commercial view and will continue to work hard to identify income streams that enable us to continue to meet the needs of our residents.</p> <p>More than ever, we recognise that our financial capacity will be less than in previous years which means that we will need to maintain our approach to innovation, collaboration and transformation. So, not only will the Council seek investment from businesses and developers, but the Council itself will explore viable and sustainable investment opportunities using all returns to support public services. We continue to invest in our teams, transform our processes and ensure our technology infrastructure is fit for purpose. We have identified a number of opportunities to improve customer access to information and services as well as our engagement with our citizens and the way in which we manage our data and information.</p> <p>Our Digital Development Plan project continues to review processes and demand, with the aim of re-designing processes to meet changing customer expectations and making the best use of technology to deliver efficient and effective services to the customer, including self-service and increased digital functionality.</p> <p>This approach will change the organisation and how it works; will require Members to put evidence and insight at the heart of our decision making to ensure that we are transparent about the rationale for our decisions and plans; will involve managed risks and will sustain essential services critical in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities at a time when demand is increasing and resources reducing.</p> <p>Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet review the most up-to-date budget forecasts on a quarterly basis, and discuss the delivery of the planned savings to support our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p>
<p>What is missing</p>	<p>Nothing identified</p>

Supporting Principle	Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balance service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.
What Assurance Do We Want	Feedback surveys and exit/decommissioning strategies Changes as a result
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Annual Survey including budget consultation completed on an annual basis. To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints. <p>Joint Scrutiny Committee (Budget) held annually to feedback Member concerns from residents.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.
What Assurance Do We Want	Budgeting guidance and protocols
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Budget setting process approved by Cabinet in August each year – including a robust process for capital investment and policy changes which requires business cases to be prepared for consideration by Executive Management Team.</p> <p>To help elected members set the council budget and priorities, every year we consult residents, businesses and the voluntary sector on spending and savings options in line with the council priorities. We also conduct a survey to hear what people think about Tamworth as a place to live. Usually these are separate consultations, however, to avoid duplication and make an efficient use of resources, this year we've combined these into one annual survey.</p> <p>In the survey we asked questions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Tamworth is like as a place to live. • Satisfaction with council services. • How people are informed about the work of the council and contacting the council. • Thoughts on council priorities. • Council income and spending options. • How we handle complaints <p>Joint Scrutiny Committee (Budget) held annually to feedback Member concerns from residents.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significantly delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved whilst optimising resource usage
What Assurance Do We Want	Financial Strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated forecasts are considered by CMT, EMT and Cabinet prior to review/scrutiny by Members at the Joint Scrutiny Committee (Budget). It is then approved by Full Council . These consider the need for any ongoing decisions on significant issues and appropriate budget changes made through the policy changes process or capital programming process.
	In year changes can be made using virements procedures (for both Officers and Cabinet) outlined within financial guidance (as well as use of contingencies). Financial impact assessment are included in reports to Committees.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring the achievement of “social value” through service planning and commissioning. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 states that this is “the additional benefit to the community...over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes”
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Service plans demonstrate consideration of “social value”</p> <p>Achievement of “social value” is monitored and reported upon</p> <p>New contracts for the delivery of repairs and investment of the Council’s property portfolio have been procured. Both contracts include a suite Social Value measures which have defined and measurable outcomes with financial penalties for non-compliance. Social Value measures range from formal training and apprenticeship schemes through to more local skills training for residents including DIY and IT with a view to reducing demand. Other local environmental improvement measures are also included. Social Value aspects have to be considered before the procurement process starts. Also, although we do not have to include social value aspects in our procurement, we do have to demonstrate that we have considered them, which means documenting this and evidencing that due consideration has been given.</p> <p>It is important that sufficient time is allowed to undertake procurements where social value is going to be included to allow for the required consideration and consultation before the process starts. The Corporate Procurement Officer must be involved at the earliest stages of the process, to ensure that proper consideration is given to what is required, and that this is adequately reflected in tender and evaluation documents and processes.</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The Procurement process includes the requirements of the Social Value Act. The requirements of the Social Value Act have been covered in staff training sessions, and the provisions of the Act have been utilised in voluntary sector commissioning projects.</p> <p>It requires Officers to consider social value issues in the procurement of major works or services i.e. impact on local labour, local economy/businesses, apprenticeships etc.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

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

Supporting Principle	Reviewing operations, performance use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.
What Assurance Do We Want	Regular reviews of activities, outputs and planned outcomes
What Assurance Do We Get	Quarterly reviews of operational business plans are in place which have performance indicators. As part of the capital programme, annual consideration of need for asset maintenance e.g. use of office space, regular stock condition surveys, asset management plan
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.
What Assurance Do We Want	Utilisation of research and benchmarking exercise
What Assurance Do We Get	Research and benchmarking exercises are completed in appropriate areas. Housing Benchmarking undertaken through Housemark and accreditation via the Housing Quality Net work Review of assets use through the One Public Estate programme and liaison with Staffordshire County Council.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.
What Assurance Do We Want	Effective operation of partnerships which deliver agreed outcomes
What Assurance Do We Get	Partnerships are in place for the delivery of some services. There is a Memorandum of Understanding in place with Lichfield District Council for the sharing of services Partnership arrangements in place, designed to help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all partnerships have good systems of governance.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.
What Assurance Do We Want	Workforce plan Organisational development Strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	There are training and development plans in place for members and officers. Officers training and development is identified through the Personal Development Review (PDR). The recruitment process ensures that skills and knowledge are measured and tested appropriately. There is an E-Induction programme in place which is available to both officers and members. Job profiles are in place for all posts and reviewed as required. All Statutory Officers are members of CMT. Job descriptions for members are included in the Constitution . They detail the purpose, duties & responsibilities and skills required for all Councillors, Leader & Deputy Leader, Members of the Executive, Chairs of Committees and the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Service reviews are informed by the Delivering Quality Services process.
What is missing	Nothing identified.
Supporting Principle	Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.
What Assurance Do We Want	Job descriptions Chief Executive and Leader pairings have considered how best to establish and maintain effective communication.
What Assurance Do We Get	Job descriptions are in place for both members and officers. The Chief Executive, the Head of Paid Service and the Leader hold regular meetings. Executive Leadership Team and the Cabinet form together to form the Executive Management Team. There is a training and development plan which is developed through the PDR process. This process is in place for all officers Members' training is provided on induction and in specialist areas. Regular training is provided for the Regulatory Committees.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body.
What Assurance Do We Want	Scheme of delegation reviewed at least annually in the light of legal and organisational changes. Standing orders and financial regulations which are reviewed on a regular basis.
What Assurance Do We Get	The scheme of delegation and scheme of delegation log is reviewed at least annually. Financial Guidance, Contract and Financial Procedure Rules are reviewed and updated on an annual basis
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring the Leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Chief Executive leads the authority in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority.
What Assurance Do We Want	Clear statement of respective roles and responsibilities and how they will be put into practice.
What Assurance Do We Get	The Constitution details the roles and responsibilities of the Leader and the Statutory Officers. Job Descriptions for members including the Leader are in the Constitution,
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	<p>Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirement is available and encouraged - Ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis. - Ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external.
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Access to update courses/information briefing on new legislation Induction programme Personal development plans for members and officers For example, for members this may include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scrutinise and challenge - Recognise when outside expert advice is required - Promote trust - Work in partnership - Lead the organisation - Act as a community leader <p>Efficient systems and technology used for effective support Arrangements for succession planning</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The PDR process identifies training needs for Officers CPD/membership of professional bodies for up to date information/changes to legislation Networking and membership of professional bodies encouraged Members' induction and training programme in place (e.g. finance, treasury management, planning, licensing, governance). Astute provide an E-learning and policy management tool which covers a number of training areas such as GDPR, FOI, Modern Slavery, Health and safety.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.
What Assurance Do We Want	Resident's panels Stakeholder forum terms of reference Strategic partnership frameworks
What Assurance Do We Get	Tenant participation is actively encouraged and completed in various formats. They provide training to tenants on a variety of day to day skills and confidence, as well as estate inspections, other events and meetings and customer satisfaction, feedback and consultation. The Citizens Panel is made up of local residents who are asked about local services. A Community Safety Partnership exist which has its own webpage https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/community-safety . The partnership brings together a number of organisations who work together to make the borough a safer place to work, live and socialise. The CSP Plan 2023-2026 is in place Partnership frameworks in place for joint working. Partnership arrangements in place designed to help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all partnerships have good systems of governance.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer reviews and inspections.
What Assurance Do We Want	Reviewing individual member performance on a regular basis taking account of their attendance and considering any training or development needs. Peer reviews.
What Assurance Do We Get	PDR process and job roles are in place for members. Peer reviews have been completed previously and any recommendations have been acted upon. Members attendance is recorded and monitored.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs.
What Assurance Do We Want	Training and development plan Staff development plans linked to appraisals Implementing appropriate human resource policies and ensuring that they are working effectively
What Assurance Do We Get	Training identified as part of the PDR process as part of continued professional development. One to one meetings are completed on a regular basis. Performance indicators are recorded on the Pentana and assigned to the relevant managers to monitor and update. Conduct and Capability policy in place. Training for managers in strategic skills as well as soft skills. HR policies in place and updated as required and in line with employment legislation.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.
What Assurance Do We Want	Human resource policies
What Assurance Do We Get	Health and safety policies are in place. Healthcare cash plan benefits for staff. Counselling service available to staff on a confidential basis.HR policies are in place. Health and well-being policy in place . TBC signed up to national initiative 'Thrive at Work'. Mental Health First Aiders have been trained. Robust management of attendance with support from Occupational Health . Regular updates with Trade unions and / or representatives. Weekly internal communications
What is missing	Nothing identified

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

Supporting Principle	Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making
What Assurance Do We Want	Risk management protocol
What Assurance Do We Get	Risk Management Policy – reviewed and updated annually and approved by Audit & Governance Committee . There is a Corporate Risk Register which is owned by Corporate Management Team which is updated on a quarterly basis and reported to the Audit & Governance Committee . Operational risk register are owned by managers and recorded on the Pentana system and linked to performance and service plans. The Finance section work with managers to help them identify their risks and record them on the Pentana system. The Internal Audit plan takes into account the identified risks on the risk registers. All decisions made by Members have risks identified in the report. A review of the approach to risk management has been undertaken by Zurich Municipal who have also led workshops with CMT and Heads of Service to further embed the approach to risk management across the Council.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Implementing robust and integral risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.
What Assurance Do We Want	Risk management strategy/policy formally approved and adopted and reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
What Assurance Do We Get	Risk Management Policy – reviewed and updated annually and approved by Audit & Governance Committee .
	All decisions made by Members have the risks identified. A review of the approach to risk management has been commissioned and is underway.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.
What Assurance Do We Want	Risk management protocol
What Assurance Do We Get	Risk registers are in place for service areas as well as having a corporate risk register in place. Owners of the risks are assigned to owners to manage and review. The Risk Management Policy details responsibilities for managing individual risks.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.
What Assurance Do We Want	Performance map showing all key activities have performance measures Benchmarking information Cost performance (using inputs and outputs) Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports that are adhered to.
What Assurance Do We Get	The corporate plan identifies key performance indicators aligned to the strategic priorities Benchmarking information is used for some services where appropriate/available Performance management cycle identifies the timetable for the submission of performance reports There is a Forward Plan in place which identifies key decisions to be made in the following four months The Asset Strategy Group identifies Post Implementation Reviews required for Capital Schemes on an annual basis.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.
What Assurance Do We Want	Discussion between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making Publication of agendas and minutes of meetings Agreement on the information that will be needed and timescales
What Assurance Do We Get	Portfolio holders hold meetings with relevant staff. All agenda and minutes are published on the website. Agendas are published 5 working days prior to the committee meeting date. The forward plan is a list of the council's key decisions that will be made over the next one to four months. These decisions will be made by either the Cabinet or by officers who have been delegated authority by the Cabinet. The forward plans are published on the first working day of the month.
	The forward plan includes a short description of the decision to be made; who will make it; when the decision will be taken; details of the planned consultation with local people and other stakeholders; and contact details for further information (including reports and background papers).
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible. (OR, for a committee system) Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making.
What Assurance Do We Want	The role and responsibility for scrutiny has been established and is clear. Agenda and minutes of scrutiny meetings. Evidence of improvements as a result of scrutiny. Planned work items identified at beginning of municipal year, Performance reporting reviewed, members now sit on tenant's consultative group. Terms of reference. Training for members. Membership.
What Assurance Do We Get	The roles and responsibilities, terms of reference for Scrutiny Committees are detailed in The Constitution Agendas and minutes are made available on the website. Scrutiny chairs report annually to full Council on their workplan. Training is provided for members on the role of Scrutiny. There is a Scrutiny Officer in post to provide support to the Scrutiny Committees. When required to assist task and finish groups the Committees can co-opt external expertise Under the remit of the Scrutiny Committees , they can call in decisions made by the Cabinet.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.
What Assurance Do We Want	Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports that are adhered to
What Assurance Do We Get	There is a calendar of dates for the submission and publishing reports which is adhered to
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g., financial statements)
What Assurance Do We Want	Financial standards, guidance. Financial and contract procedure rules.
What Assurance Do We Get	Financial and contract procedure rules and financial guidance are in place and reviewed and updated regularly. There is a robust project management process in place with post implementation reviews completed at the end of the project.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the objectives
What Assurance Do We Want	Risk management strategy. Audit plan. Audit reports.
What Assurance Do We Get	The risk management strategy is reviewed, updated and approved annually by the Audit & Governance Committee . The Audit plan is based on an internal audit risk assessment which takes into account risks identified by Heads of Service and endorsed by the Audit & Governance Committee . Quarterly reports of progress against the audit plan are submitted to the Audit & Governance Committee Audit reports are concise and reported in a timely manner. All high priority recommendations and those arising from no and limited assurance overall opinion reports are followed up, the results of which are reported to the Audit & Governance Committee. All recommendations are assigned to the relevant officers for actioning.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Evaluating and monitoring the authority's risk management and internal control on a regular basis
What Assurance Do We Want	Risk management strategy/policy has been formally approved and adopted and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis
What Assurance Do We Get	The Risk Management Policy/Strategy is reviewed, updated and then approved by the Audit & Governance Committee on an annual basis. Quarter updates of the risk management action plan are also submitted to the Committee.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place
What Assurance Do We Want	Compliance with the relevant codes of practice, best practice. Counter fraud policies and strategies. Participation in data matching (e.g. NFI)
What Assurance Do We Get	Routine reports on counter fraud to the Audit & Governance Committee. Dedicated resource in the Corporate Anti Fraud Officer. Regularly reviewed counter fraud policies and strategies including anti money laundering, whistleblowing.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.
What Assurance Do We Want	Annual Governance Statement. Effective internal audit resource and maintained.
What Assurance Do We Get	The Annual Governance Statement is produced in accordance with the guideline alongside the Code of Corporate Governance. The Annual Governance Statement is signed by the Leader and the Chief Executive. Internal Audit is adequately resourced and complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). An annual self-assessment against the PSIAS is completed and in line with the Standards and External Quality Assessment (EQA) is completed every five years. The EQA was completed in 2017 and confirmed compliance with the Standards. It is next due in 2022.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	<p>Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment - That its recommendations are listened to and acted upon
What Assurance Do We Want	<p>Audit committee complies with best practice. See Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police</p> <p>Terms of reference Membership Training</p>
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>The terms of reference for the Audit & Governance Committee are detailed within the Constitution. Members of the Committee are independent of the Cabinet and the Chair reports annually to Full Council. The Audit & Governance Committee receive quarterly update reports on Risk Management which include a review of the Corporate Risk Register, an update of the risk management action plan and they approve the Risk Management Policy on an annual basis.</p> <p>Any recommendations made by the Audit & Governance Committee are recorded in the minutes and acted upon.</p> <p>The Audit & Governance Committee complete an annual self-assessment against Audit Committee guidance issued by CIPFA and any areas for improvement are acted upon.</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to Safeguard personal data
What Assurance Do We Want	Data management framework and procedures Designated data protection officer Data protection policies and procedures
What Assurance Do We Get	The Council has a designated Data Protection Officer, with the Information Governance Manager assigned to this role. The Council has reviewed a framework of Information Governance policies and procedures, these include but are not limited to an Information Security Policy, Data Protection Policy, Data Protection Impact Assessment Procedure, Cyber Security Policy and Business Continuity Plan. Cyber Security awareness rolled out to staff across the Authority. Mandatory GDPR/FOI training for all staff. Work continues to progress in relation to ongoing compliance to the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) requirements. PSN compliance.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies
What Assurance Do We Want	Information Sharing subject to defined Information Sharing protocols. A register of Information Sharing Agreements held centrally.
What Assurance Do We Get	The Council has signed up to Staffordshire One Information Sharing Protocol. Individual Information Sharing Agreements are in place within various area (EG, Benefits, Environmental Health, Housing, Partnerships) with details of such agreements available on the Council's Intranet. A register of Information Sharing agreements is held by the Councils Data Protection Officer.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring
What Assurance Do We Want	Data quality procedures and reports Data validation procedures
What Assurance Do We Get	Auditing of data is completed in accordance with the risk based internal audit plan. Data is validated as part of the internal controls in place within the various systems. Knowledge, Performance and Insight service providing information to aid accurate and informed decision making and performance monitoring.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance
What Assurance Do We Want	Financial management supports the delivery of services and transformational change as well as securing good stewardship
What Assurance Do We Get	<p>Council, on 27th February 2023, approved a 3 year Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund with a Council Tax increase of 2.95% for the year – in order to continue to deliver those services essential to the Local Community.</p> <p>With regard to the Housing Revenue Account, a 5 year MTFS was approved by Council including significant investment in new housing development projects to meet future housing needs and sustain the HRA in the longer term.</p> <p>On 5th February 2024, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government published a written ministerial statement on the 2024/25 local government finance settlement. The one year settlement is reflected in the MTFS. The ruling out of a business rates reset, or a fair funding review in the near term means that the funding distribution will stay fairly stable (with the exception of Extended Provider Responsibility funding). But this means that the big questions about the future of the funding system remain unaddressed one way or another.</p> <p>While this means the Council will be able to retain its business rate growth for 2023/24 and 2024/25, it also means that the uncertainty continues and potentially the Council still faces losing this growth from 2026/27. There is a high risk that these reforms will have a significant effect on the Council's funding level from 2026/27. Members will face difficult decisions around prioritising services, when faced with significant reductions in funding.</p> <p>There are also further uncertainties arising from current cost pressure and inflationary increases which have compounded the likely price increases for supplies that are required for building or construction/maintenance works.</p> <p>The Council remains committed to promoting and stimulating economic growth and regeneration; meeting our housing needs; creating a vibrant town centre economy and protecting those most vulnerable in our communities. The Council is responding to these challenges by considering the opportunities to make further savings and /or grow our income. We are ambitious with our commercial view and will continue to work hard to identify income streams that enable us to continue to meet the needs of our residents.</p> <p>More than ever, we recognise that our financial capacity will be less than in previous years which means that we will need to maintain our approach to innovation, collaboration and transformation. So, not only will the Council seek investment from businesses and developers, but the Council itself will explore viable and sustainable investment opportunities using all returns to support public services.</p> <p>We continue to invest in our teams, transform our processes and ensure our technology infrastructure is fit for purpose. We have identified a number of opportunities to improve customer access to information and services as well as our engagement with our citizens and the way in which we manage our data and</p>

	<p>information.</p> <p>Our Digital Development Plan project continues to review processes and demand, with the aim of re-designing processes to meet changing customer expectations and making the best use of technology to deliver efficient and effective services to the customer, including self-service and increased digital functionality.</p> <p>This approach will change the organisation and how it works; will require Members to put evidence and insight at the heart of our decision making to ensure that we are transparent about the rationale for our decisions and plans; will involve managed risks and will sustain essential services critical in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities at a time when demand is increasing and resources reducing.</p> <p>Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet review the most up-to-date budget forecasts on a quarterly basis, and discuss the delivery of the planned savings to support our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p>
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls
What Assurance Do We Want	Budget monitoring reports
What Assurance Do We Get	Budget monitoring reports are available monthly and ad hoc as required. Accountants complete regular budget monitoring reports with budget managers.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Supporting Principle	Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate. Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.
What Assurance Do We Want	Website Annual report Continual development of Modgov
What Assurance Do We Get	All reports are made available on the website for the public to access apart from anything confidential as laid down by the Local Government Act 1972 and subsequent enabling legislation and guidance The Corporate Plan is published on an annual basis and made available on the website. All information is made available in accordance with the Transparency Agenda. Where Freedom of Information requests are made and it is beneficial to publish the data on the website, this is completed to ensure that the Authority is transparent and it also reduces the number of information requests received.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources.
What Assurance Do We Want	Formal annual report which includes key points raised by external scrutineers and service users' feedback on service delivery. Annual financial statements
What Assurance Do We Get	The Corporate Plan is refreshed on an annual basis. The financial statements are produced in accordance with the laid down timetable and presented to the Audit & Governance Committee for approval. The External Auditors produce the Annual Audit Letter and the Audit Findings Report which is presented to the Audit & Governance Committee.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring members and senior management own the results.
What Assurance Do We Want	Appropriate approvals
What Assurance Do We Get	Decisions approved by Cabinet and Full Council as detailed within the Constitution Accounts (including AGS) approved by Audit & Governance Committee. Minutes of the meetings are made available on the website.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (Annual Governance Statement).
What Assurance Do We Want	Annual Governance Statement
What Assurance Do We Get	Results and actions arising from this assessment will go in the Annual Governance Statement for approval by Audit & Governance Committee
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.
What Assurance Do We Want	Annual Governance Statement
What Assurance Do We Get	The Annual Governance Statement is prepared by the Governance Group which is made up of lead officers within the Authority. The revised Personal Development Review document will include reference to the core principles of Corporate Governance.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations.
What Assurance Do We Want	Format follows best practice
What Assurance Do We Get	High level corporate plan projects/programmes and corporate risk register included in the Statement of Accounts Financial statements prepared in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice (as all Councils should) including relevant performance information from the Corporate Plan.
What is missing	Nothing identified

Supporting Principle	Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon
What Assurance Do We Want	Recommendations have informed positive improvement Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
What Assurance Do We Get	All recommendations made by the External Auditors are acted upon. Compliant and supporting evidence in the review of arrangements in relation to compliance with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit and compliance to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards which has been further demonstrated following and external assessment completed in 2017.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.
What Assurance Do We Want	Recommendations have informed positive improvement
What Assurance Do We Get	A Corporate Peer Challenge is planned for 29 - 31 October 2024
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.
What Assurance Do We Want	Annual Governance Statement
What Assurance Do We Get	Partnership arrangements in place designed to help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all partnerships have good systems of governance. Informed by Corporate Risk Register.
What is missing	Nothing identified
Supporting Principle	Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.
What Assurance Do We Want	Community Strategy
What Assurance Do We Get	Partnership arrangements in place designed to help the Council work with its partners to ensure that all partnerships have good systems of governance.
What is missing	Nothing identified