

CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

It comprises the systems and processes, and the cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.

In 2016 CIPFA and SOLACE issued a revised framework developed by the CIPFA/SOLACE Joint Working Group on Good Governance in Local Government building on the *International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC 2014)*. This sets the standard for local authority governance.

The **Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (April 2016)** positions the attainment of sustainable economic, societal and environmental outcomes as a key focus of governance processes and structures. It emphasises the importance of considering the longer term and the links between governance and public financial management.

The Approach

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and property accounted for, and is used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have adopted the Local Government Framework in line with good practice, including the principles that underpin it. The Council has developed this Code of Governance to demonstrate that their governance structures are consistent with the core and supporting principles contained in the Local Government Framework.

Each year Council conducts a review of the effectiveness of its System of Internal Control and governance arrangements to ensure compliance with the Code of Governance. This review informs the production, review and approval of the Annual Governance Statement.

Principles of Good Governance

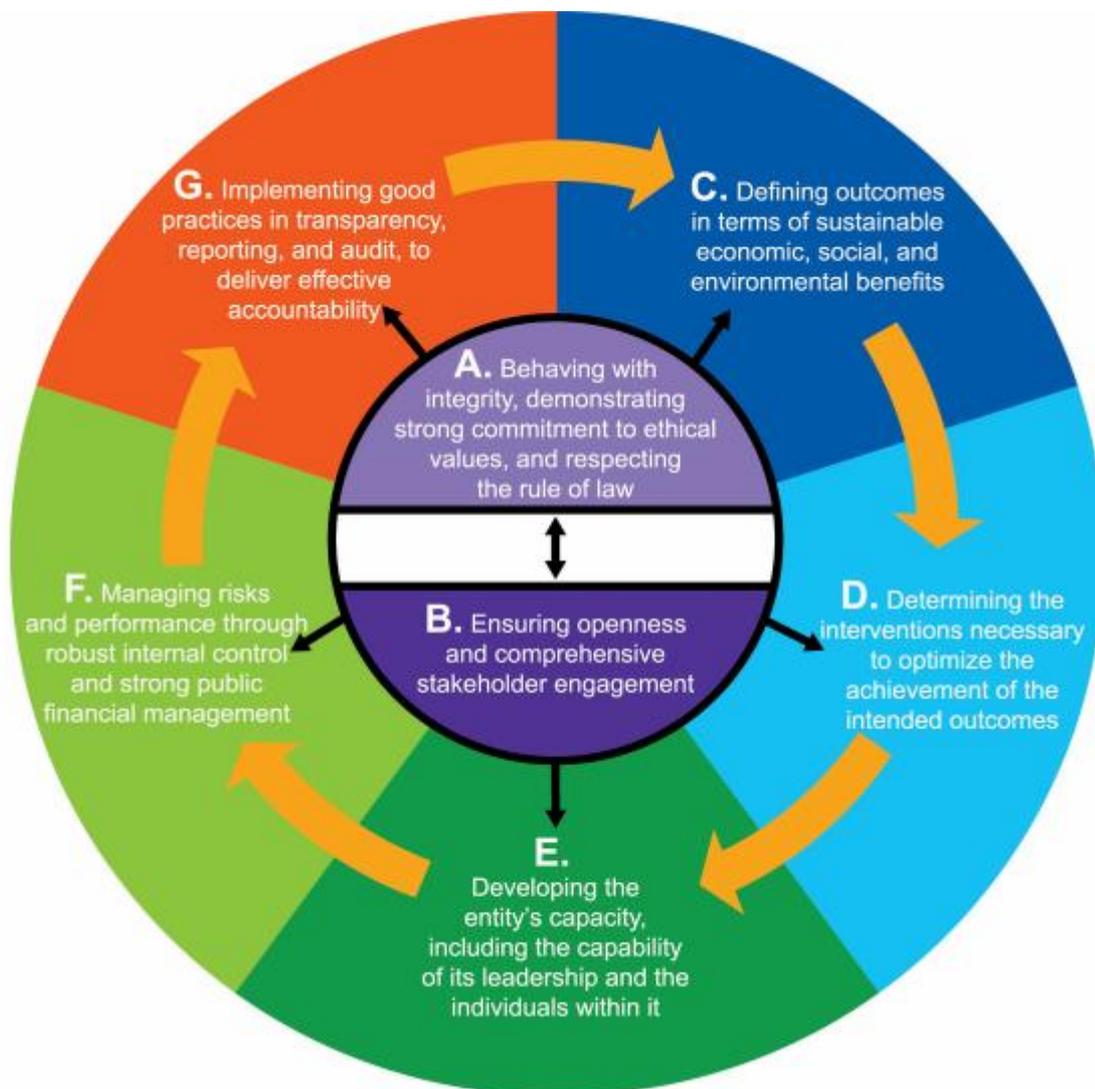
The *International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector*, (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) defines governance as:

“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 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 of society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders."

The diagram below illustrates how the various principles for good governance in the public sector relate to each other. The seven core principles each contain a set of supporting principles, which in turn have a range of specific requirements that apply across Council business and these are described in detail on the following pages.

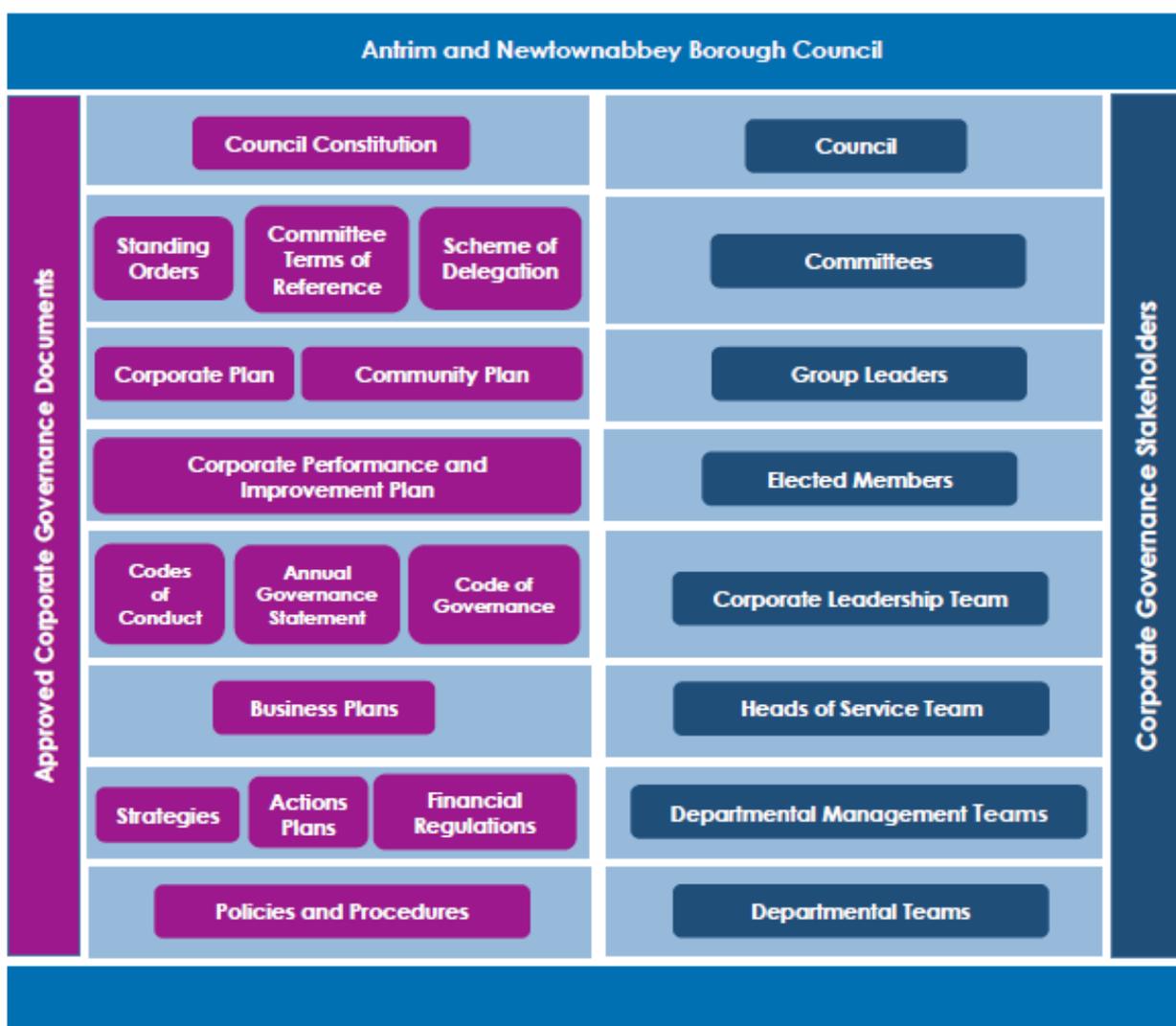


The Council's Code of Governance is based on the seven core principles set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework (2016 edition). How we meet these seven core principles is reviewed and updated annually.

Compliance with the Code

A summary of the key elements of Council's Governance Framework is depicted in the diagram below. They have been split into Approved Published Documents and Corporate Stakeholders, with the aggregation of these forming the governance of Council

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



The following Code of Governance Schedule provides details of Council's own systems, processes and documentation to demonstrate compliance.

Code of Governance Schedule

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
Acting in the public interest requires:	This commitment will require:	
<p>A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p> <p>Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.</p>	<p>(1) Behaving with integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation • 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) • Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (1,2,3) • Corporate Plan (2024-2030) (1,2,3) • Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (1,2,3) • Local Government Employee Councillor Working Relationship Protocol (1,2,3) • Codes of Conduct for Councillors and Employees: Code of Conduct Councillors (1,2,3) • Standing orders (1,2,3) • Policy framework (1,2) • Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (1,2,3) • Fraud Response Plan (1,2,3) • Anti-Bribery Policy (1,2,3) • Raising Concerns Policy (1,2,3) • Councillor's Declaration of Interest (1,2,3) • Register of Interest (1,2,3) • Councillor Hospitality and Gift Register (1,2,3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>(2) Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance • Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation • Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values • Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the organisation <p>(3) Respecting the rule of law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual related party declarations (1,2,3) • Financial Regulations (1,2,3) • Procurement Policy Procurement • Contract Management Policy and Procedure (2) • Scheme of Delegation link: (1,2,3) • Planning Scheme of Delegation link: (1,2,3) • Protocol for the Operation of Planning Committee • NIAO Annual Report (1,2,3) • Equality scheme (2) • Disability-Action-Plan (2) • Complaints Policy and Procedures (1,2,3) • Model Complaints Handling Procedures (January 2024) (1,2,3) • Dignity and Respect at Work Policy (1,2,3) • Safeguarding Policy (1,2,3) • Social Media Policy (to be reviewed) (1,2,3) • Committee Terms of Reference (1,2,3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders • Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively • Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively 	
<p>B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Local authorities are run for the public good, they therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.</p>	<p>(1) Openness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness • 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 • Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Plan Framework (1,2,3) Community Planning • Corporate Plan (2024- 2030) (1,2,3) • Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (1,2,3) • Performance Governance Arrangements (2025-26) • Council Minutes and Audio Recordings Minutes and Audio (1) • Live streaming meetings Live Stream (1) • Employee Engagement Plans (3) • Employee Engagement Surveys (3) • Communication and Consultation Strategy (to be reviewed) (1,2,3) • Customer Surveys in Resident Magazine Council Magazines (1,2,3) • Surveys and Consultations(1,2,3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action <p>(2) Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively • Ensuring that partnerships are based on 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 <p>(3) Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandums of Understanding (2) • Third Party Data Sharing Agreements (2) • Publication Scheme (1) • Freedom-of-Information-Policy (1) • Contract Management Policy and Procedure (2) • Local Development Plan 2030 Local Development Plan 2030 /(1,2,3) • Guide to community engagement in the planning process (1,2,3) • Community Planning Partnership (1,2,3) • DEA Member Engagement Groups (1,2,3) Community Planning • Policing and Community Safety Partnership (1,2,3) • Policing and Community Safety Strategic Plan 2025-28 (1,2,3) • Good Relations Programme (1,2,3) Good Relations • Community Plan & Statement of Progress (1,2,3) Community Plan • PEACEPLUS (1,2,3) Peace Plus

¹ NB institutional stakeholders are the other organisations that local government needs to work with to improve services and outcomes (such as commercial partners and suppliers as well as other public or third sector organisations) or organisations to which they are accountable.

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes • Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement • Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs • Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account • Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity • Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans (3) Neighbourhood-Renewal • Community Resilience Projects (2,3) • Levelling Up Fund (2,3) • Labour Market Partnership (2,3) • Communication and Consultation Strategy Surveys and Consultations (1,2,3) • Local Economic Partnership (2)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
<p>In addition to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest in principles A and B, achieving good governance in the local government also requires effective arrangements for:</p>	<p>This commitment will require :</p>	
<p>C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p> <p>The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available</p>	<p>(1) Defining outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions • 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 • Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available • Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes • Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available <p>(2) Sustainable economic, social and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Improvement Policy (1,2) • Community Plan Framework (1,2) Community-Planning-Overview • Corporate Plan (2024 – 2030) (1,2) • Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 • Performance Governance Arrangements (2025/26) • Quarterly Reviews of Performance (1,2) • Annual Directorate Business Plans (1,2) • Annual Corporate Workshops (1,2) • Community Plan (1,2) Community Plan • Current Development Plan (1,2) • Planning Policy Statements (1,2) Planning NI • Risk Management Policy and Procedures (1,2) • Environmental Policy (2)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>environmental benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering and balancing the combined sustainable economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision • Taking a longer-term sustainable view regarding 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 • Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs • Ensuring fair access to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model Complaints Handling Procedure (January 2024) • ISO 14001 Environmental Management Accreditation: Certificates (2) • Equality-Scheme (2) • Disability-Action-Plan (2) • Grant Aid Provision (Community, Business, Leisure, Arts and Heritage) (2) • Local Economic Partnership (1,2)
<p>D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes</p> <p>Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended</p>	<p>(1) Determining interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore, ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided. • Considering feedback from citizens and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan (2024-2030) (1,2,3) Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (1,2,3) • Performance Governance Arrangements (2025-26) • Corporate Planning Workshops (1,2,3) • Performance Management Framework • Quarterly review of performance (1,2,3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
<p>outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>(2) Planning interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets • Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered • Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks • Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances • 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 • Ensuring capacity exists to generate the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to NIAO and Council/Committee on Council Performance in relation to statutory indicators (2) • Economic Appraisals (1,2,3) • Business Cases (1,2,3) • Post Project Evaluations • Grant Aid Provision (Community, Business, Leisure, Arts and Heritage) (1,2) • Economic Development business programmes and support (1,2) • Risk Management Arrangements (1,2) • Estimates Process (2,3) • Financial Regulations • Committee Terms of Reference (2) • Quarterly Review of KPIs (2) • Annual Council Performance Report (2) • Capital Investment Programme (1,2,3) • Monthly Financial Reports (2,3) • Year End Financial Statements (2,3) • Medium Term Financial Plan 25/26 to 27/28 (Three-Year Budget Forecast, and Capital Programme). (2,3) • Treasury Management Prudential Indicators (on-going). (2,3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>information required to review service quality regularly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan • Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy <p>(3) Optimizing achievement of intended outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and trades off service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints • Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term • Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimizing resource usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2,3) • Treasury Management Policies and Strategy (including the Annual Investment Strategy). (2,3) • Annual Report of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the reserves. (2,3) • Model Complaints Handling Procedure (January 2024) • Communication and Consultation Strategy (to be reviewed)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	through service planning and commissioning	
<p>E. Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p> <p>Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organization as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.</p>	<p>(1) Developing the entity’s capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness. Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently. Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources <p>(2) Developing the capabilities of the entity’s leadership and other individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained. Publishing a statement that specifies the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Planning and Performance Management Training for HoS (1) Performance Management Framework (1) Quarterly Reviews (KPIs) (1) standing orders (2) Job Descriptions (1,2) Organisational Structure approved by Council (1) Monthly Group Leaders Meeting (1) CLT Meetings (1) Joint HoS and SMT Meetings (1,2) Financial Regulations (1) Member Development Working Group (2) Elected Member Development Policy (2) Member Learning and Development Policy Statement (2) Elected Member Development Strategy 2024-2027 (2) Training Programme for Members (2) Annual General Meeting link: Council-and-Committee-Minutes (1) Council Committee Structure (1)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the leaders and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads 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 taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections • Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective 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: <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 requirements 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegation (2) • Planning Scheme of Delegation: (2) • Bi Annual Chief Executive Review (2) • Member Induction (2) • Chair and Vice Chair Training (2) • Health and Safety Policy (2) • Annual Personal Review and Development Plan (2) • Leadership Development Programmes (2) • Employee Engagement Framework (2) • Training Programmes for staff (2) • Managing Attendance Policies (1,2) • Council's Constitution link: (1) • Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Meetings • Joint CLT/SMT Meetings

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>their knowledge on a continuing basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external • Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation • Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections • Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs • 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 	

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
<p>F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p> <p>Local authorities need to ensure that the entities and governance structures that they oversee have implemented—and can sustain—an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. They consist of an ongoing process designed to identify and address significant risks involved in achieving outcomes.</p> <p>A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability.</p> <p>It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.</p>	<p>(1) Managing risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making • Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively • Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated <p>(2) Managing performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review • 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 • Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making, thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible • Providing members and senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Policy and Procedures (1,3) • Service and Corporate Risk Register Reviews (1,3) • Performance Improvement Policy (2) • Corporate Plan (2024-2030) (1,2,3) • Corporate Performance and Improvement Plan 2025/26 (1,2,3) • Performance Governance Arrangements (2025/26) • Quarterly Review (KPIs) (2) • Annual Council Performance Report (2) • Estimates Process (2) • Financial Regulations :(2) • Monthly Financial Reports (2) • Year End Financial Statements (2,5) Financial Statements • Quarterly Prompt Payment Performance Reports (2,5) Prompt Payment Performance • Committee Terms of Reference (1,2,3) • Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference (1, 2, 3) • Internal Control Checklists (1,3) • Annual Governance Statement (1,3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements) <p>(3) Robust internal control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives • Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis • Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place • Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor • Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group/ function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director and Head of Service Assurance statements (1,3) • Council-and-Committee-Minutes (1,3) • Internal Audit and Internal Audit Charter (1,2,3,4,5) • Internal audit strategy (1,2,3,4,5) • NI Audit Office External Audit (2,3,5) • Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (1,2,3) • Fraud Response Plan (1,2,3) • Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the system of internal control (1,2,3) • Third Party Data Sharing Agreements (4) • Information Governance Strategy (4) • Code of Governance(4) • https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/freedom-of-information/ (4) • https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/gdpr/gdpr/ (4) • Data Breach Notification Procedure (4) • Service Information Asset Registers (4) • Surveillance Camera Policy (4) • Remote Access Policy • Software Usage Policy • Wireless Network Policy

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon <p>(4) Managing Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data • Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies • Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring <p>(5) Strong public financial management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance • Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tablet and Smartphone Policy • ICT Acceptable Use Policy • Retention and Disposal Policy (4) • Information Security Policy (4) • 3 Year Financial Forecast (5) • 3rd Party Treasury Advisors (5) • Annual Investment Strategy (5)
<p>G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</p> <p>Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are</p>	<p>(1) Implementing good practice in transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council meetings and Committees are open to the public and members of the media (1) • Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings published on website link: Council-and-Committee-Minutes (1)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
<p>answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.</p>	<p>intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny whilst not being too onerous for the authority to provide and for users to understand <p>(2) Implementing good practices in reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way • Ensuring members and senior management own the results reported • Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the annual governance statement) • Ensuring that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate • Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio Recordings of Council and Committee Meetings published on website link: Council-and-Committee-Minutes/Audio Recordings (1) • Live Streaming of Council and Committee Meetings: Live Stream • Publication Scheme link: Publication-Scheme (1) • Freedom of Information Database/Log (1) • "Borough Life" Residents magazine (1) Council Magazines • Corporate Web-site/live chat (1) • Use of Social Media/direct messaging • Annual Governance Statement (1,2,3) • NIAO Annual Report (1,2,3) • Annual Council Performance Report (1,2) • Performance Governance Arrangements (2025/26) • Monthly Financial Reports (2) • Year End Financial Statements (2) Financial Statements • Equality Commission Annual Monitoring Return (1,2) • Audit Committee link: Council-and-Committee-Minutes (1,2,3) • Implementation of Audit Recommendations (3)

Principles and sub principles	The Council is Required to:	We will do this through the following:
	<p>and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations</p> <p>(3) Assurance and effective accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon • Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations • Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement • Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Strategy and Plan. (1,2,3) • Internal Audit Annual Report (3) • Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the system of internal control (3) • NIAO Improvement Audit and Assessment Report (3)