



Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee 27 June 2011

Annual Governance Statement 2010/11

SUMMARY

The Council is required to produce and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), covering six laid down core governance principles. The AGS is to be approved by Full Council, and signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer.

The proposed AGS for 2010/11 accompanies the Statement of Accounts. It covers:

- the Council's responsibilities in terms of the governance framework;
- St Edmundsbury's governance environment relating to the six laid down corporate governance principles; and
- the effectiveness of St Edmundsbury's arrangements and any significant areas of weakness identified, with proposed actions to address these.

The governance framework is designed to facilitate the achievement of the council's policies, aims, and objectives and to identify and manage risk to a reasonable level. The governance framework is embedded within the Constitution and the systems, policies, procedures and operations in place throughout the council.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report sets out the detail supporting the council's AGS. Members are asked to confirm that the AGS fairly reflects the corporate governance arrangements in place at the council.

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Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee 27 July 2011

Annual Governance Statement 2010/11

1. Recommendations

1.1 Members are asked to review the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2010/11 and to recommend its content for approval prior to accompanying the council's financial statements, and to endorse the process used to compile the AGS and review of internal controls for application in future years. In particular, members are asked to consider:

- the adequacy of the governance framework outlined in section 3 and Annex A of the AGS, as well as the Assurance Framework (**Appendix 1**)
- the adequacy of the processes to review the effectiveness of internal control outlined in section 4 of the AGS; and
- the result of the review of the effectiveness of internal audit referred to in section 4 of the AGS and contained within report C79 and **Appendices 1 to 3** of that report.

Finally, Members are asked to consider whether the internal control assessment and proposed additional areas for improvement (Assurance Framework and related Action Plan) provided at Appendices 1 and 2 of this report are adequate, and if so to recommend them for approval.

2. Purpose of Report

2.1 The report sets out the detail supporting the council's AGS. Members are asked to confirm that the AGS fairly reflects the corporate governance arrangements in place at the council.

3. Background

3.1 The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 require the council to prepare and publish an AGS from 2007/08 onwards in place of the Statement on Internal Control.

3.2 Governance is about how the council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values, by which the council is directed and controlled and through which it is accountable to, engages with, and where appropriate, leads communities.

3.3 The six core principles defined in the CIPFA/SOLACE '*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework*' guidance each have a number of supporting principles, which in turn have a range of specific requirements that apply across the council's business. These are outlined in detail in Annex A of the Annual Governance Statement.

3.4 Each year the council has to carry out a review of its governance arrangements to ensure compliance with the Code. The purpose of the review is to provide assurance that governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively or to identify action which is planned to ensure effective governance in the future. This requires the council to:

- (a) consider the extent to which it complies with the principles and requirements of good governance set out in the Framework
- (b) identify systems, processes and documentation that provide evidence of compliance

- (c) identify the individuals and committees responsible for monitoring and reviewing the systems, processes and documentation
 - (d) identify the issues that have not been addressed adequately and consider how they should be addressed
 - (e) identify the individuals who would be responsible for undertaking the actions required and plan accordingly.
- 4 The outcome of this review forms the basis of the AGS which is prepared on behalf of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer. Clearly they must be satisfied that the AGS is supported by reliable evidence and accurately represents the corporate governance environment. The Committee receives this Statement for consideration and review prior to it accompanying the council's 2010/11 Statement of Accounts which is due to be submitted for approval at Full Council on 27th September 2011. Any changes or comments this Committee wishes to make to the AGS will be made before it is signed by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer.
- 5 The evidence gathering process to support the AGS has been undertaken by a small officer working group consisting of the Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer), the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer), the Internal Audit Manager, the Senior Auditor, and the Policy, Performance & Customer Service Manager.
- 6 Evidence already held corporately was matched to the core principles as defined in the Framework and the group was then asked to review and comment on the content.
- 7 The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee also monitors the action proposed in last year's AGS. Any ongoing issues are reflected in the 2010/11 AGS Action Plan (**Appendix 2**).

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

- a) Internal Audit Annual Report 2010/11.
- b) Review of Internal Audit 2010/11 (presented alongside the AGS)
- c) Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA SOLACE, 2007)

Annual Governance Statement 2010/11

By the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer

1. Scope of responsibility

- 1.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council (the council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The council has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*.
- 1.4 A copy of the Code is available electronically (via the website <http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/sebc/live/pdf/policy/Code%20CG.pdf>) or can be obtained from the Policy Unit. This Statement explains how the council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(3) of The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 whereby all relevant bodies should prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

2. The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1 Governance is about how the council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. (Definition taken from the CIPFA/SOLACE document referred to above in paragraph 1.3)
- 2.2 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.
- 2.3 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

2.4 The governance framework has been in place at the council for the year ended 31 March 2011 and up to the date of approval of the annual Statement of Accounts.

3. The governance framework

3.1 The core governance principles of the council are as follows:

- (a) focusing on the purpose of the council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- (b) members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- (c) promoting values for the council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- (d) taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- (e) developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
- (f) engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

3.2 The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the council's governance arrangements are discussed under these principles in **Annex A**.

3.3 In June 2009, CIPFA launched its *Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Public Service Organisations*. The Statement supports CIPFA's work to strengthen governance and financial management across the public services. The Statement which consists of five fundamental principles is supported by good practice benchmark checklists in relation to:-

- a) governance requirements,
- b) core responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer, and
- c) personal skills and professional standards.

3.4 In the Statement CIPFA recommends that organisations should use the Statement as a framework to benchmark their existing arrangements, and that they should report publicly on compliance to demonstrate commitment to good practice in both governance and financial management.

3.5 The Chief Finance Officer undertook a self assessment in 2009/10 to determine the degree with which the council complies with the checklists. Overall, the self assessment illustrated that the council was already substantially complying with requirements. The main area for development where we could further strengthen our arrangements was that more work should be undertaken in collaborating with partners and stakeholders when planning the longer term financial strategy of the council. This area has been acknowledged and indeed is a fundamental part of the work being undertaken to take forward our shared services strategy with Forest Heath District Council.

3.6 In addition, the governance requirements to support the principles in the Chief Financial Officer statement were incorporated into the authority's local Code of Corporate Governance.

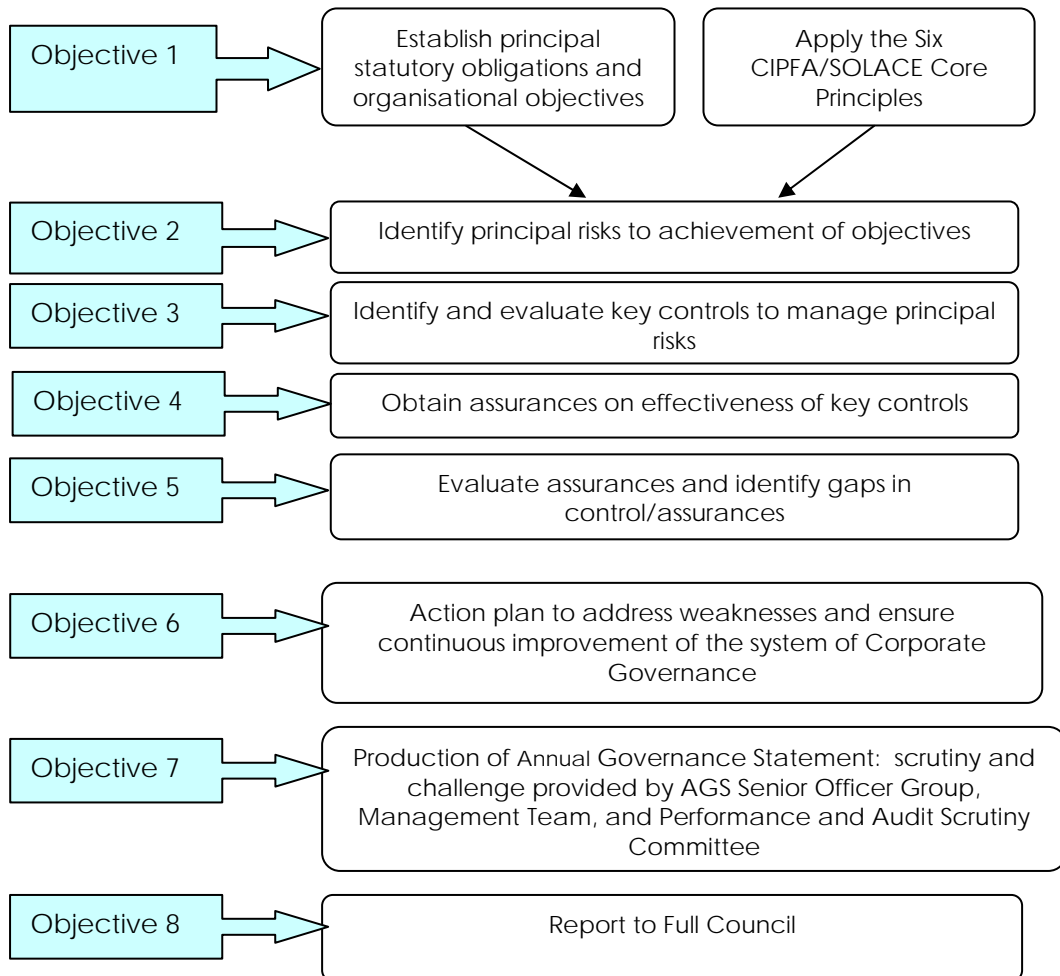
4. Review of effectiveness

4.1 St Edmundsbury Borough Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by:

- the work of the senior managers within the council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment;
- the Internal Audit Manager's annual report; and also
- comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

4.2 This review of effectiveness is undertaken in line with CIPFA guidance 'The Annual Governance Statement, Rough Guide for Practitioners' and follows the process shown below.

Review of Annual Governance Statement and Assurance Gathering Process:



4.3 Evidence was collected against each objective of the above process and was then reviewed by the AGS Senior Officer Group, and an action plan agreed.

4.4 Maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework is achieved through / informed by the following:

- The council revised its **Code of Corporate Governance** during 2008 to ensure that it reflects good practice. Further changes were made in 2010 in accordance with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework document '*Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government; a Framework*' issued in March 2010. In addition to reviewing the Code, the council continues to review and put into place improved policies, management processes and reporting arrangements to enable it to satisfy itself that its approach to corporate governance is both adequate and effective in practice and that sound systems of internal control are operating.
- The council's **corporate governance arrangements** include clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the Constitution for the Chief Executive Officer (as Head of Paid Service), the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (as Monitoring Officer) and the Chief Finance Officer (as the council's Section 151 Officer).
- The **Monitoring Officer** is responsible for the administration of the council's political management structures, including ensuring that the council has acted lawfully and that agreed standards have been met.
- The **Chief Finance Officer** is Section 151 Officer for the purposes of satisfying the Local Government Act 1972 and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate advice is given to the council on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.
- Issues of strategic and corporate importance are referred to the **Cabinet**. Executive functions are performed by the Cabinet. These functions are grouped together in the form of Cabinet portfolios, with responsibility for them allocated to individual Members of the Cabinet, on an annual basis.
- **Management Team** has overall responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment and reviews the draft Annual Governance Statement prior to submission to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.
- A **Standards Committee** is in place, its roles and functions include promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors, assisting councillors to observe the Members' Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and overseeing matters referred to the Monitoring Officer by an Ethical Standards Officer of the National Standards Board. A high level of compliance with the Members' Code of Conduct is indicated by the very small number of complaints of breach made to the Standards Committee; none of which were upheld. (It should be noted that the Localism Bill proposes dismantling the Standards Committee and we are currently awaiting details regarding this).

- The primary purpose of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** is to improve the delivery of policies and services by providing a check on the way the council works i.e. by acting as a 'critical friend' and addressing the 'corporate health' of the authority as a whole. The **Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee** is independent from the executive function. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee monitors and scrutinises the performance of the council's services through receiving regular reports in relation to performance indicators, financial performance, risk management and internal control. This committee also acts as the council's audit committee. The Policy Development Committee has been abolished following a review of the council's scrutiny structure. Policy reviews are now carried out by 'task and finish' groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with budget responsibilities of the Policy Development Committee transferring to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.
- The **Strategic Risk Management Group** review corporate risks ensuring that actions are being taken to manage the council's risks effectively. The group meets quarterly to review the effectiveness of the council's risk management framework. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee has specific responsibility for scrutinising risk management and receives quarterly risk management update reports at its meetings and approves key documents including the Risk Management Strategy and the Corporate Risk Register. Risks of concern are referred to Cabinet.
- The council has a **Performance Management Group**, its vision to support the Council and its partners to improve performance and value for money for service users. The Performance Management Group meets every two months to monitor and review performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.
- The council has monitored the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key (local and national) performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.
- The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 required that 'the body shall maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper internal audit practices', although from 31st March 2011 the requirement has been changed by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 to 'undertake' such an audit, with the revised wording more accurately reflecting the nature of internal audit.

Internal Audit is an assurance function that provides an independent and objective opinion to the organisation on the control environment, by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation's objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources. The results of the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit were reported to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in July 2011, and confirmed that the system of internal audit is

effective, with plans to address areas for development and ensure continuous improvement is in place.

In addition, during 2009/10 the Audit Commission undertook a comprehensive review of Internal Audit's work against CIPFA's internal audit standards and found that Internal Audit is fully compliant with all eleven areas of the CIPFA Code. This gives the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee assurance that it can fully rely on the work of the Internal Audit team.

- Based upon the audit work undertaken during the financial year 2010/11 the **Internal Audit Manager** can provide reasonable assurance that the system of internal control of the council, within the areas reviewed, as well as the risk management systems, were operating adequately and effectively. Internal Audit work has, however, identified a number of areas where existing arrangements could usefully be improved.
- The council is subject to an annual programme of **independent external audits and statutory inspections**. The external auditor reports on the council's governance, performance and accounting arrangements. The council received a very positive Annual Audit & Inspection Letter 2009/10, published in January 2011 from the Audit Commission. Key messages include:
 - The council uses a number of different methods of engagement depending on the issue and stakeholders involved. The council can demonstrate that the views of local people are taken into account when determining future developments.
 - The council's financial standing is sound and it has a track record of performing within budget. The council continues to reinforce the importance of financial planning.
 - The council continues to develop a range of collaborative arrangements for procurement with other council and partners. Partnership arrangements have brought value for money, for example, shared waste procurement has led to lower costs and working with Suffolk County Council at West Suffolk House has enabled the council to rationalise services and share contract costs.
 - The council performs very well on natural resources. It was the first local authority in Suffolk, and one of the first in the region to review climate change and energy dependency. Benchmarking against other organisations in the region show the council to be the best public sector performer in the region on reducing the impact of climate change.
- The council also received an unqualified audit opinion on the council's 2009/10 financial statements. In forming their opinion the Audit Commission made reference to the statements presented for audit being of a high standard and free from material error. In addition, they did not identify any significant weaknesses in internal control.
- The council's Constitution includes both **Financial and Contracts Procedure Rules**. All proposals of a significant nature are assessed for legality, risk and financial impact prior to a decision being made.

4.5 We (the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer) have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and a plan to address the identified weakness and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

5. Significant governance issues

5.1 Significant governance issues are considered to be those issues which could have a significant impact on achieving the organisation's key corporate objectives.

Conclusion

5.2 As a result of the work undertaken to review arrangements within the governance framework for 2010/11, no significant issues have been identified.

This is a reflection of the strong corporate governance framework adopted by the council.

Signed: **Date:**.....
Leader of the Council

Signed: **Date:**.....
Chief Executive Officer

Evidence to Support the Core Principles

Annex A

Core Principle		Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
1	Focusing on the purpose of the council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.	<p>Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the council's purpose, vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.</p> <p>Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury, along with its partners, is in the process of setting out long-term strategic objectives in Vision 2031 (this will update the existing vision set out in Vision 2025). Vision 2031 is a new strategic long term vision which includes every aspect of life in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the Rural Area including housing, shops, business, open spaces, schools, transport, health, social services, leisure and planning for new neighbourhoods. Whilst the masterplan has yet to be implemented, work has begun on its development. Consultations were launched in February 2011, followed by a series of drop in events. The document will be drafted over the summer of 2011 and completed by February 2012.</p> <p>The council sets out its objectives and priorities within the Corporate Plan. A new Corporate Plan is being developed which will be ready by April 2012.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan also reflects our contribution to the West Suffolk Community Strategy and the Suffolk Community Strategy (with the abolishment of the duty to prepare a Community Strategy discussions will take place for the future of transforming Suffolk); documents which also set out a vision for the future, together with a programme of priorities that local organisations are working towards.</p> <p>The Annual Report provides a review of the council's achievements over the past 12 months and advises of the Cabinet's commitments for the coming year.</p> <p>An annual audited Statement of Accounts is produced and published showing the council's financial position.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council was re-assessed as 'Excellent' in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out in 2007.</p> <p>The council's Organisational Assessment of 2008/09 (the last prior to work on Comprehensive Area Assessments ceasing in May 2010) concluded an overall score at level three. In summary,</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>commissioning.</p> <p>Ensuring that the council makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.</p>	<p>the council performs well in how it manages finances, governs its business and performs excellently in managing resources with the council receiving a level four in workforce planning. This set St Edmundsbury Borough Council amongst the top performing districts in the country.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan explains links to resources and service plans. The Medium Term Financial Strategy is a key driver of the plan. In order to ensure that we are delivering our priorities, we are continually developing our corporate planning and performance framework. The key objectives of the framework are to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a culture of achievement; • that priorities influence, and flow from, the West Suffolk Community Strategy and the Suffolk Community Strategy (or its replacement); • performance against our targets is monitored effectively; • short, medium and long term priorities are agreed and regularly reviewed; • objectives and activities in service plans are consistent with corporate priorities; • performance against key performance indicators is monitored and reported regularly, and action is taken to correct any shortfall in performance; and • resources needed to achieve targets are identified and allocated. <p>The council's overall financial arrangements are governed by the Medium Term Financial Strategy which sets out the financial framework for delivery of the council's priorities. This is supported by robust budget setting and monitoring arrangements and the Financial Procedure Rules which form part of the Constitution.</p> <p>The current economic climate continues to have a significant impact on Local Authorities, with significant cuts announced in the government's spending review of autumn 2010. The council is responding to these changes by seeking opportunities for joint working with other local authorities, in particular with Forest Heath District Council, the purpose of which is to achieve efficiency savings for both, whilst maintaining and where possible, improving services offered to the residents of both areas.</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
		<p>The council has itself adopted an innovative approach to achieving efficiencies through service reviews and the DR-IVE (Innovation, Value and Enterprise) programme. It has an excellent track record of achieving year on year budget savings, having delivered £7million since 2005/06.</p> <p>Treasury management reporting to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee occurs on a timely basis, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Strategy is reported before the start of the financial year; • the Annual Report on operational activity compared to the Strategy is reported after the end of the financial year. <p>Reference to the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities and associated treasury management clauses are included in the council's Constitution. In addition, a Treasury Management Sub-Committee of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee has been established, to fulfil the enhanced scrutiny requirements of the revised Code.</p> <p>The annual Internal Audit review of the Treasury Management function for the financial year 2010/11 provided assurance that the council operates in accordance with CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management.</p> <p>All spending services / sections are required to monitor budgets on a monthly basis, in consultation with the Finance Section, with each section / department allocated a named accountant. Spending departments / sections are responsible for their income and expenditure and are therefore accountable to members for their budgets.</p> <p>Members are regularly briefed on key messages from the financial process – e.g. Performance and Audit Scrutiny, and Cabinet receive regular reports on review of capital programme,</p>

Core Principle		Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
			<p>treasury management, budget monitoring. Cabinet reports cover financial implications. Externally, the council's financial plans are communicated through the annual Budget Book, Council Tax Leaflet, the Cabinet Annual Report, and also the Summary of Accounts document published on the council's website which matches what we have spent to our priorities. The Medium Term Financial Strategy is also available on the website via the relevant committee report.</p> <p>Budget information will also on occasions be included in Community Spirit, a corporate magazine distributed to every borough household.</p>
2	Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.	Ensuring effective leadership throughout the council and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.	<p>The council's Constitution sets out the roles of councillors, the Leader, the Mayor and Cabinet, responsibility for functions, committee/scrutiny panel terms of reference and rules of procedure. The Constitution sets out the roles of chief officers and statutory officers and the responsibility for functions. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 • The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is the Monitoring Officer and the Proper Officer in accordance with the Local Government Acts (except where signified under other officer delegations) and the Registration Service Act 1953 and is responsible for the administration of the council's political management structures. • The Chief Finance Officer is Section 151 Officer of the Local Government Act 1972 and is responsible for making sure that appropriate advice is given to the council on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control. <p>Corporate Management Team meets on a weekly basis and consists of the chief officers, namely, Chief Executive, Corporate Directors (Community and Economy and Environment) and is attended by the Chief Finance Officer. They provide the strategic direction of the council in delivering the requirements of the members.</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard.</p>	<p>The role of the Cabinet is to develop policies and services within the framework of the Corporate Plan, acting on information provided by officers. The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the council and Portfolio Holders. Meetings are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed and all decisions made within these bodies are ratified by Full Council.</p> <p>The council has several committees which carry out regulatory or scrutiny functions.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury's scrutiny process has a good reputation and the council is often asked for advice, or for representatives to present at conferences, the most recent example of which involved the Council sharing its experience of Councillor Call for Action at the LGC Annual Scrutiny Conference in November 2010, following which several councils requested copies of St Edmundsbury's CCfA Protocol.</p> <p>Policy and decision making are facilitated by a clear framework of delegation set out in the council's Constitution, with clear details of delegated authorities to officers. The council also has a Scheme of Financial Delegation. An appropriate level of delegation to senior managers enables speedy decision making.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer occupies a critical position in any organisation, holding the financial reins of the business and ensuring that resources are used wisely to secure positive results. While the global financial crisis and economic downturn have made these tasks even more challenging, they have also underlined the fundamental importance of the role. In St Edmundsbury the Chief Finance Officer reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>The current responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer role include Financial Services, ICT, Revenues and Benefits, Internal Audit, and Procurement. A summary list of her statutory responsibilities appears in the Constitution.</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Ensuring relationships between the council, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.</p>	<p>A Standards Committee is in place, its roles and functions include promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors, assisting councillors to observe the Members' Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct and overseeing matters referred to the Monitoring Officer by an Ethical Standards Officer of the National Standards Board.</p> <p>The Constitution includes guidance on communicating with the media, Member / Officer Protocols and the Members' Allowance Scheme.</p> <p>An Officer Appointments Committee exists to deal with the appointment, discipline and termination of employment of Chief Officers (other than the Head of Paid Service). The Committee meets only on an ad hoc basis as and when required.</p> <p>The Corporate Planning process follows the 'golden thread' approach which links the council's priorities to individual Performance Development Reviews.</p> <p>The council has a corporate mission 'to be an excellent performing council', which is underpinned by four corporate priorities, which have been cascaded throughout the authority and to partner organisations.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan which forms part of the Annual Report provides the focus for our service planning and budget setting. It identifies what is most important for the council as a whole. The Annual Report shows how we have built upon those foundations over the past year through a series of Cabinet commitments – our promises to deliver what our residents and businesses tell us is most important to them.</p> <p>The council's overall financial arrangements are governed by the Medium Term Financial Strategy which sets out the financial framework for delivery of the Council's priorities. The Medium Term Financial Strategy supports longer term financial forecasting and decision making and takes into account all significant financial inflows and outflows. The Strategy is reviewed by</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
		<p>the Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The council continues to listen to feedback from the local community and to learn from best practice across the country. With this in mind, the council developed its Communications Strategy. This Strategy, which covers the period 2007 to 2010 details the actions planned to improve effective communications with all stakeholders across a range of methods and approaches.</p> <p>A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The Communications Strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The Communications Strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Strategy details how we will engage with all our communities in St Edmundsbury to improve local services and help local people to influence decisions by making sure they have the information necessary to make informed decisions. The Strategy is intended as a useful resource for both councillors and officers when carrying out community engagement activity.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury recognises the importance of partnership working and the benefits it can bring in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services for local people and achieving more efficient use of resources. For example, the joint Waste Management Partnership with Forest Heath has been in operation since 2008. During 2010/11 the partnership successfully redesigned the waste collections. The project was completed on time, with little disruption to customers and within budget. Importantly, the organisation achieved savings of £100,000 for both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath in respect of wages and fuel.</p>

Core Principle		Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
			<p>The council has an excellent track record of delivering savings, the process is known as DR-IVE and the outcomes have delivered significant savings since 2005, for example, efficiency savings and increased income of £1.9m have been delivered as part the 2011/12 budget.</p> <p>A Partnership Strategy has been developed, to help ensure that the council's partnerships are formed, monitored and reviewed with the appropriate level of governance arrangements in place to achieve better outcomes.</p> <p>A memorandum of understanding has been drawn up between St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, in respect of the shared services agenda. The purpose of the document is to demonstrate to the public, councillors and staff how the two councils will work together to maintain service levels, increase resilience and deliver services at lower costs to residents, businesses and visitors in West Suffolk.</p> <p>The council's website provides information to the public on 'Your Councillors' and a 'Guide to Services' which is available in Polish, Portuguese and Russian, as well as English. We also use translation services for overcoming language barriers.</p>
3	Promoting values for the council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.	Ensuring members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.	<p>The Members' Code of Conduct, the Member / Officer Protocols, the Responsibility for Functions, (all within the Constitution), and the staff Code of Conduct (including registers of interests and of gifts and hospitality), are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define the standards of personal behaviour individual councillors, officers, and agents of the council must follow; and • ensure that elected councillors and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. <p>Each member receives copies of the meeting agenda in advance. As one of the agenda items for each meeting, members are required to declare any interests at the outset of the meeting.</p> <p>Members are also required to submit declarations of conflicting interest forms which are held for</p>

Evidence to Support the Core Principles

Annex A

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
		<p>public scrutiny.</p> <p>Conduct of members is monitored by the Standards Committee, who deals with matters relating to propriety and councillors' conduct.</p> <p>A complaints procedure is in place for the council to receive and investigate any complaint made against it.</p> <p>The Financial Procedure Rules make it clear that any suspected irregularities should be reported to the appropriate officers and the Whistleblowing Guide is available on the council website.</p> <p>Anti-Money Laundering Notes and an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy are also available for staff and others. In addition, an Anti-Money Laundering Policy has been developed and approved by Full Council. The policy has been designed to ensure the council and its staff are fulfilling all legal obligations and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>The bi-annual fraud awareness newsletter continues to be published to staff. It is designed to highlight areas of fraud in the workplace and to help staff understand why we need to combat it effectively.</p> <p>A number of fraud messages have been included within the council's weekly staff newsletter to remind staff of their responsibilities regarding declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality; expenses claims; and information security.</p> <p>In addition, annual reminders continue to be sent to members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned about.</p> <p>An anti-fraud survey was developed and circulated to staff in April 2010 to assess the level of fraud awareness within the council.</p>

Evidence to Support the Core Principles

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Core Principle		Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
		Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.	<p>The organisational values are defined in the Corporate Plan and these are, that the council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is focused on the needs of all those who use our services; • provides value for money; • manages resources, information and data effectively; • works in partnership; • strives for improvement; • values and invests in staff and councillors; • celebrates success; • is committed to promoting equality and diversity; and • is accountable and accessible. <p>The Financial Procedure Rules lay down the duties and responsibilities of the council and officers in relation to financial administration. All departments, employees and members of the council, and any associated organisations, are covered by the Rules.</p> <p>Internal Audit carry out a risk based programme of audit reviews ensuring controls are in place and are effective. These controls encompass financial systems, corporate governance arrangements, risk management and performance management.</p>
4	Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.	Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.	<p>The council's Constitution sets out how the council operates and the process for policy and decision making.</p> <p>Full Council sets the policy and budget framework, whilst all key decisions are made by the Cabinet. Cabinet meetings are open to the public (except where items are exempt under Freedom of Information Act). The Leader's Forward Plan of key decisions to be taken over the next four months is published on the council's website.</p> <p>All decisions made by Cabinet are made on the basis of written reports, including assessments of the legal, policy and resource implications, sustainability, diversity and equality and</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
		<p>community impact, and consideration of the risk involved and how these will be managed. All Cabinet decisions are made in the full knowledge that they may be 'called in' by a small group of councillors.</p> <p>All committee agendas and minutes are available on-line for the public to access, with paper copies available on request (except where there are restrictions).</p> <p>The council has an active scrutiny function and audit committee, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services by providing a check on the way the council works, i.e. by acting as a 'critical friend' and addressing the 'corporate health' of the authority as a whole. • The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee which acts as the council's audit committee has specific responsibility for scrutinising the Statement of Accounts, risk management, performance management, audit arrangements, the Annual Governance Statement and budgetary control and monitoring. <p>The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining an adequate and effective system of Internal Audit. Internal Audit currently has a full complement of committed, skilled and experienced staff.</p> <p>The Audit Commission's comprehensive review of Internal Audit's work against CIPFA's internal audit standards in 2009/10 found that Internal Audit was fully compliant with all eleven areas of the CIPFA code.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer has direct access to both the Audit Committee and the Audit Commission.</p> <p>Policies and procedures governing the council's operations include both Financial and Contracts</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.</p>	<p>Procedure Rules. Ensuring compliance with these is the responsibility of management across the council. Internal Audit checks that policies and procedures are complied with. Where incidents of non-compliance are identified, appropriate action is taken.</p> <p>A complaints, comments and suggestions process is in place for service users who are not happy with the level of service provided.</p> <p>The Constitution includes the functions of both the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, with specific regard to ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision-making.</p> <p>Budget monitoring reports are sent to budget holders on a monthly basis and also to Management Team with variances greater than £10k highlighted. This format makes significant variances more visible so that timely action can be taken to address them.</p> <p>In addition, budget monitoring reports are reviewed quarterly by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, with specific focus being given to the variances and an understanding of how and why they have arisen, and what action is being taken to address them.</p> <p>The council is committed to making its finances clear, so that everyone can see exactly how we are spending money. As part of our commitment to providing financial transparency, the council produces regular reports of all expenditure over £500 including VAT.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council collects and uses many different types of data from a wide variety of sources, which include customers, stakeholders and partners and other local authorities and government bodies.</p> <p>Open data is about increased transparency and sharing the information the council holds with the wider community. The council has created an 'open data' page on its website which provides information about the way in which it works and how its finances are spent.</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.</p>	<p>The council has a Performance Management Group, its vision is to support the council and its partners to improve performance and value for money for service users. The group meets every two months to monitor and review performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.</p> <p>The council has recently introduced Covalent Performance Management Software. This system is being used in conjunction with Forest Heath District Council as part of the Shared Services Agenda. Covalent is a web based performance management tool that allows for upload of all Performance Indicators. The system currently has the Key Performance Indicators (as reported to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee) and various local indicators for use by individual services. It is anticipated that more services will use the tool for storing/measuring performance overtime. The system also has capacity for project planning, risk management and customer feedback which will be introduced once use of the performance indicator aspect of the system has been embedded.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury has adopted a Data Quality Policy to set out clear objectives for maintaining and improving data quality. All council staff and councillors are required to adhere to this policy. It is anticipated that a joint Data Quality Policy between both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath will be approved during the summer of 2011 which will focus on transparency and accountability issues.</p> <p>An information sharing protocol has been produced in respect of the shared services agenda. As a part of the initiative both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath are sharing data to facilitate improved service delivery. The protocol sets out the minimum rules for sharing information.</p> <p>The Risk Management Strategy provides guidance to members and officers on responsibilities and on the application of risk management processes.</p> <p>A Strategic Risk Management Group, made up of senior officers and the portfolio holder with</p>

Evidence to Support the Core Principles

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Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their</p>	<p>responsibility for risk has been established to oversee work on the development, promotion, implementation and embedding of risk management.</p> <p>The Group meet quarterly to review, update and monitor progress of the Corporate Risk Register, for consideration and challenge by Management Team and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Mitigating actions are agreed and implemented, with each having individual owners and, where possible, target completion dates. The greatest number of risks will be reduced (treated) which involves taking action to reduce either the probability or the impact of the risk, this will be through the selection and implementation of a control or range of controls.</p> <p>New and more concise risk management guidance for managers has been produced in Spring 2011 and an online risk management training module designed to improve the general level of understanding of risk management across the organisation.</p> <p>It is the role of the council's Internal Audit section to review, appraise and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system of internal control, risk management and governance and how these arrangements are operating. This is achieved by undertaking audits across the council's functions in accordance with the Audit Plan. Annually, the Internal Audit Manager drafts a report for presentation at the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee which includes his opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's risk management systems and internal control environment.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.</p> <p>The council's Monitoring Officer advises management on new legislation and compliance with the council's Constitution. She will also use her statutory powers to report to Full Council where</p>

Evidence to Support the Core Principles

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Core Principle		Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
		area.	<p>there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures.</p> <p>Within service areas staff monitor the introduction of legislation specific to their expertise, for example changes to planning fees or new food safety regulations.</p> <p>Where legislation has a corporate or cross-cutting effect, Legal Services and Policy will generally co-ordinate dissemination of information and training.</p> <p>A protocol for the referral of Councillor Calls for Action to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been introduced, to guide members seamlessly through the process.</p>
5	Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.	<p>Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.</p> <p>Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.</p> <p>Encouraging new talent for</p>	<p>The council provides chief officers with staff, accommodation, and other resources which in their opinion are sufficient to allow their duties to be performed.</p> <p>The council aims to ensure that members and officers of the council have the skills, knowledge and capacity they need to discharge their responsibilities and recognises the value of well trained and competent staff in effective service delivery (this was reflected in the Organisational Assessment of 2008/09 with the council performing excellently in managing resources, receiving a level four in workforce planning).</p> <p>Job descriptions and person specifications have been drawn up for posts to ensure that the best candidates are appointed into each position.</p> <p>All officers employed by the council receive an annual Performance Development Review at which performance can be measured against set objectives. Training needs are also identified as part of this process and addressed via the Human Resources service and /or individual service as appropriate.</p> <p>A Workforce Development Plan is in operation and this includes the following aspects: developing leadership capacity, developing skills and capacity of the workforce, developing the</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>membership of the council so that best use can be made of resources in balancing continuity and renewal.</p>	<p>organisation, resourcing local government and pay and rewards. Training courses are regularly advertised in the weekly staff newsletter.</p> <p>We continue to support workforce development through the positive promotion of Adult Learner Week and in 2010 were delighted to win the East of England Local Government Association's Award for Workforce Development. Our focus on adult learning has also resulted in our work being identified as best practice by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.</p> <p>Interim arrangements have been put in place to share the Learning and Development Service across both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. A range of learning opportunities are offered to staff, with a focus on interventions to support the delivery of the Shared Services programme.</p> <p>E-learning modules continue to be developed; topics include health and safety, fraud awareness, risk management, climate change and ICT Security. Learning in this way brings with it a number of benefits, for example, convenience, affordability, ease of use and informative.</p> <p>A learning and development resource page is available for employees on the intranet. The page contains quick links, contact information, information relating to local providers and other learning and development resources.</p> <p>The council encourages succession planning and promotion from within. This ensures that valuable skills and experience are rewarded and passed on, rather than being lost.</p> <p>Some departments have introduced career grades to assist with succession planning, for example, the Finance Section.</p> <p>Induction and training programmes are in place for both members and officers. Induction training courses for members are provided after each election which are open to experienced as</p>

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Core Principle		Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
			<p>well as new members, and include a section on standards, ethics and codes of conduct. Corporate induction days are held for new officers joining the council, their aim to provide an overview of the corporate vision and priorities of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, an understanding of the activities of the council and the role of staff in these activities.</p> <p>Each year all councillors are provided with a Member Development Plan to complete, in order to identify their own priorities for improved skills and knowledge. In addition, a range of skills workshops via the Member Development Programme are offered to councillors. During 2010/11 these included training sessions on presentation skills, handling challenging situations, and partnership working. Individual councillors attended conferences on important national issues including the 'Big Society', housing and rural issues.</p> <p>Also during 2010/11 we had a re-assessment of the Member Development Charter. The assessment report was largely positive. However, the assessors were not able to re-confirm Charter Status and made a small number of recommendations including finding opportunities to involve more Councillors in the training programme and linking training more closely to corporate and national priorities. The assessors are confident that actions to be put in place following the Borough Council elections (12 new borough councillors were elected in May 2011) will enable us to re-achieve Charter Status before the end of 2011.</p> <p>Political groups have a role in encouraging new talent and representatives of all sections of the community to stand for election as members of the council.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Strategy sets out the council's commitment to community engagement. It details how we will coordinate the way we engage with all our communities in St Edmundsbury to improve local services and help local people to influence decisions by making sure they have the information necessary to make informed decisions.</p>
6	Engaging with local people and	Exercising leadership through a robust	St Edmundsbury Borough Council recognises that communication with all stakeholders plays a fundamental role in the successful delivery of high quality, cost effective services.

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
<p>other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.</p>	<p>scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.</p>	<p>The council is constantly striving to improve its communications performance, to build on its track record of continuous improvement and to ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and staff.</p> <p>The council continues to listen to feedback from the local community and to learn from best practice across the country. With this in mind, the council has developed its Communications Strategy. This Strategy, which covers the period 2007 to 2010 details the actions planned to improve effective communications with all stakeholders across a range of methods and approaches.</p> <p>A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The Communications Strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The Communications Strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p> <p>The council recognises the importance of partnership working and the benefits it can bring in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services for local people and achieving more efficient and effective use of resources. The council is involved in a number of partnerships that continue to evolve and many more partnerships are likely to be formed in the future. Through its Partnership Strategy, the council set out its long term vision for successful partnership working and defines clear guidance for future partnership arrangements and ensures that existing partnerships are monitored and reviewed appropriately.</p> <p>We established the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP) in 2001, in response to the Government's requirement that local authorities work more closely in partnership with other organisations. The Board of the WSLSP reviewed its function and purpose in May 2011. While</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service</p>	<p>recognising the role of grant giving (Reward Grant) has diminished considerably it was felt that there is benefit in maintaining the current arrangements certainly until the full effects of the Localism Bill are fully known.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a variety of ways in which to challenge the Cabinet, one being via the call-in process, although the council uses this mechanism sparingly, which can be taken as a sign that the decision making process is working as it should. There were no call-ins during 2010/11.</p> <p>The Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) allows the council to refer matters to its Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The aim is to help councillors raise matters on an authority's agenda on behalf of their constituents. There were no CCfAs during 2010/11.</p> <p>The Annual Scrutiny Report sets out achievements and explains the future work programme. The report is not intended to cover all the work of the scrutiny committees, but to present some examples of where and how scrutiny has contributed to changes and service improvements.</p> <p>A Shared Services Steering Group (Members) has been established. The objective of the group to advise and support council's in identifying and driving forward the shared services agenda. The purpose of which is to achieve efficiency savings for both, whilst maintaining and where possible, improving services offered to the residents of both areas.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Strategy sets out the council's commitment to community engagement. It details how we will coordinate the way we engage with all our communities in St Edmundsbury to improve local services and help local people to influence decisions by making sure they have the information necessary to make informed decisions. This Strategy supports our aspiration for partnership working as set out in our Partnership Strategy, which states: "Partnership working is becoming increasingly important to ensure that services are delivered to local people and communities in an effective way and making the best use of</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>delivery whether directly by the council or in partnership.</p>	<p>available resources".</p> <p>St Edmundsbury consults routinely with the public on a range of matters, for example, Vision 2031. The council's home page provides links to various activities that invite consultation with the public.</p> <p>In February 2008 a Statement of Community Involvement setting out the council's policy for involving the community in the preparation of local development documents and in the consideration of planning applications was approved. The document indicates when and how people can get involved in planning matters and what they should expect when they do. The Statement of Community Involvement forms the basis of the Community Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>The council's Economic Development section also produces a regular newsletter which is sent to businesses within the Borough and partner agencies.</p> <p>The council engages a wide range of stakeholders in order to understand their needs. For example: we have worked for over a year with the Southgate Community Partnership which is taking on the ownership of the Southgate Community Centre. Along with responsibility for all aspects of running and maintaining the centre they now have the flexibility to run and develop the centre in the way the local community wants. Also, in Haverhill we have consulted with residents on the Clements estate about how they wanted the old school site developed. A group of local residents is now working with officers to develop allotments, a community garden and some open space, including a play area. This engagement assists us to identify priorities and plan our services.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council has kept a 'careful eye' on Suffolk County Council's New Strategic Direction and had discussions between officers around the most appropriate methodology of service deliver at the local level.</p> <p>For several years there has been a half-hour Public Question Time at the start of each full</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>Making best use of human resources by taking an active and</p>	<p>council meeting which is open to residents of the Borough and is always used. The questions and responses are minuted briefly to indicate the topics raised, which in 2010/11 have included the Apex logo, the location of the Wednesday Craft Market in Bury St Edmunds and applications for the lease of the Corn Exchange.</p> <p>The Annual Report shows how the council has built upon its foundations over the year through a series of Cabinet commitments – our promises to deliver what our residents and businesses tell us is most important to them. The Annual Report also sets out our plans for the year ahead and beyond. Being clear on what is a priority is essential if we are to continue providing high quality services in key areas.</p> <p>The Bury St Edmunds Public Service Village is an innovative partnership, initially between St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council. West Suffolk House was the first phase of this development and opened in March 2009. It brings together a range of public sector services on one site, providing better, more cost-effective services and better value for money for customers. Bringing both groups together in one building provides the opportunity for much closer working and co-ordination of services. For example, the building is now shared with Improvement East and staff from HM Revenue and Customs, whilst the Safer Neighbourhood Team visits West Suffolk House twice a month to answer queries and concerns raised by the public.</p> <p>The council has a formal complaints procedure which allows the public or other stakeholders to make a complaint regarding the service received from the council. Complaints can be made on-line, by telephone, or in writing, and the council has set targets for responding to all complaints received, ensuring accountability to its stakeholders.</p> <p>Consultation with staff is carried out through staff briefings, the staff survey and through formal consultation with the Trades Union.</p>

Core Principle	Supporting Principles	St Edmundsbury Evidence
	<p>planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.</p>	<p>As referred to earlier, the council is actively supporting its employees through the shared services agenda. For example, a series of change workshops are being held by both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, they include facilitation days, developing and maintaining resilience, CV writing skills, and interview techniques.</p> <p>In addition, an extranet site has been created for use by councillors and staff from both authorities, with a newsletter also published regularly so that councillors and staff can be kept up to date with the work going on at the Shared Services Steering Group and Project Board.</p>

Objective 1 – Establishing principal statutory obligations and organisational objectives:	
Step 1: In support of objective 1 – Mechanism established to identify principal statutory obligations	
Examples of Assurance	Council Assessment / Evidence / Action Required
1. Responsibilities for statutory obligations are formally established	Responsibilities for statutory obligations are contained within Part 3 of the Constitution – Responsibility for Functions. An overview of the council's Management Structure is provided in Part 7.
2. Record held of statutory obligations	The Legal Section houses a legal library. Regular updates on changes to legislation are available on the internet through our subscription to WestLaw (on-line legal information service) and through the intranet service Suffolk Legal Interactive.
3. Effective procedures to identify, evaluate, communicate, implement, comply with, and monitor legislative change exist and are used	Within service areas staff will monitor the introduction of legislation specific to their expertise, for example changes to planning fees or new food safety regulations. Service Plans include identification of legislation relevant to the service. Also where perceived as a risk this will be included in Service Plan. Where legislation has a corporate or cross-cutting effect, Legal Services and the Policy Unit will generally co-ordinate dissemination of information and training. Management Team also receives briefings on new issues and legislation. A standard item has been included on the agenda to ensure a more formal approach is adopted.
4. Effective action is taken where areas of non-compliance are found in either mechanism or legislation	The Monitoring Officer will use statutory powers to report to Full Council where there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures, for example a planning decision. Other mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on areas of non compliance with statutory requirements include: ❖ External audit and inspection work / reports ❖ Internal Audit – an audit report is produced at the end of each audit, its primary purpose to communicate to management information that provides an independent and objective opinion on the control environment and risk exposure and to prompt management to implement agreed actions. Follow up processes are used to confirm that management have implemented the agreed audit recommendations. Internal Audit has a duty to monitor the implementation and to report accordingly where non implementation of controls is identified.
Step 2: In support of Objective 1 – Mechanism in place to establish organisational objectives	
Examples of Assurance	Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required
1. Consultation with stakeholders on priorities and objectives	The council continues to listen to feedback from the local community and to learn from best practice across the country. With this in mind, the council developed its Communications Strategy. This Strategy, which covers the period

	<p>2007 to 2010 details the actions planned to improve effective communications with all stakeholders across a range of methods and approaches. A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The communications strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The communications strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p> <p>The council also uses a variety of data sources, such as the indices of multiple deprivation, census data, satisfaction surveys and other survey outputs to understand community needs. Work is targeted at areas of need, such as rural isolation. The council engages with the community in a variety of ways to ensure that it has a good understanding of their needs.</p> <p>Examples of external consultation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Community Engagement strategy sets out the council's commitment to community engagement. It details how we will coordinate the way we engage with all our communities in St Edmundsbury to improve local services and help local people to influence decisions by making sure they have the information necessary to make informed decisions. ❖ St Edmundsbury, along with its partners, is in the process of setting out long-term strategic objectives in Vision 2031 (this will update the existing vision set out in Vision 2025). Vision 2031 is a new strategic long term vision which includes every aspect of life in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and the Rural Area including housing, shops, business, open spaces, schools, transport, health, social services, leisure and planning for new neighbourhoods. Whilst the masterplan has yet to be implemented, work has begun on its development. Consultations were launched in February 2011, followed by a series of drop in events. The document will be drafted over the summer of 2011. ❖ Corporate Plan and Cabinet Commitments reviewed annually, using consultation findings (e.g. consultation from specific projects and strategy development). ❖ The council also has an approved Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how the community can engage in the planning process. The document includes specific reference to engaging with 'hard to reach' groups. This forms the basis of the Community Engagement Strategy. ❖ Targeted community engagement and consultation, both generally and for specific pieces of work is carried out, for example, Westley Play Equipment – to improve the provision of play equipment and Haverhill Shopping Survey – where stakeholders in the town compiled a survey to find out what the shoppers and visitors to Haverhill think about the services on offer. The council also tries to adapt and develop consultation techniques to keep them fresh and relevant.
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<p>2. The authority's priorities and organisational objectives have been agreed (taking into account feedback from consultation).</p>	<p>The council's Corporate plan sets out our objectives and priorities. Both the Corporate Plan and Cabinet Commitments are reviewed annually, using consultation findings (e.g. consultation from specific projects and strategy development).</p>
<p>3. Priorities and objectives are aligned to principal statutory obligations and relate to available funding</p>	<p>Corporate Plan refers to our 4 priorities. It also refers to our statutory duties, the requirement to find efficiency savings and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Budget setting and the Medium Term Financial Strategy are key drivers of corporate planning.</p>
<p>4. Objectives are reflected in departmental plans and are clearly matched with associated budgets</p>	<p>Service planning process and format agreed through Management Team. Each service plan refers back to the council's priorities and has to demonstrate "fit" to objectives. Only activities which are funded can be included in the service plans. Links are also made in the plans to financial and staff resources, and risk management.</p> <p>Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees produce annual reports and a summary of achievements is included in the council tax leaflet. Community Strategy and the Community Engagement Strategy are also monitored, as well as other strategies and action plans, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Corporate Plan – aligns Cabinet Commitments to the 4 priorities. ❖ Service Plans are aligned to risk registers which are monitored in accordance with the Risk Management Strategy.
<p>5. The authority's objectives are clearly communicated to staff and to all stakeholders, including partners.</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury recognises that communication with all stakeholders plays a fundamental role in the successful delivery of high quality, cost effective services.</p> <p>Corporate objectives and aims are set out in the Annual Report, Corporate Plan and Service Plans.</p> <p>From 2009/10 the borough council's Annual Report and Corporate Plan was merged into one document. It made sense to combine the two, not least because in many ways they are inextricably linked. The Corporate Plan is the bedrock upon which St Edmundsbury's foundations are built and provides the future focus for our service planning and budget setting. It identifies what is most important for the council as a whole and guides our managers as they put together plans for their services in the coming year. The Annual Report shows how we have built upon those foundations over the past year through a series of Cabinet commitments – our promise to deliver what our residents and businesses tell us is most important to them.</p> <p>Communication of corporate objectives is included within the council's overall Communications Strategy. This Strategy, which covers the period 2007 to 2010 details the actions planned to improve effective communications with all stakeholders across a range of methods and approaches. A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The communications strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The communications strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p>

<p> </p>	<p>Examples of cross departmental communications include regular Management Team meetings as well as regular staff briefing sessions which communicate amongst other things council objectives and progress being made against these, and give staff an opportunity to raise related issues.</p> <p>The council recognises the importance of partnership working and the benefits it can bring in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services for local people and achieving more efficient and effective use of resources. The council is involved in a number of partnerships that continue to evolve and many more partnerships are likely to be formed in the future. Through its Partnership Strategy the council sets out its long term vision for successful partnership working and defines clear guidance for future partnership arrangements and ensures that existing partnerships are monitored and reviewed appropriately.</p> <p>The current economic climate continues to have a significant impact on local authorities, with significant cuts announced in the government's spending review of Autumn 2010. The council is responding to these changes by seeking opportunities for joint working with other local authorities, in particular, with Forest Heath District Council. With our colleagues at FHDC we have embarked on an ambitious programme of shared services which involves exploring and developing business cases for the future delivery of services across both councils, the purpose of which is to achieve efficient savings for both, whilst maintaining and where possible, improving services offered to the residents of both areas.</p>
<p>Step 3: In support of objective 1 – Effective corporate governance arrangements are embedded within the authority</p>	
<p>Examples of Assurance</p>	<p>Council Assessment / Evidence / Action Required</p>
<p>1. Code of corporate governance established</p>	<p>The Code of Corporate Governance was revised last in 2010 to bring it up to date with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework document <i>'Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government; a Framework'</i> issued in March 2010. The Code is available on both the council's website and intranet.</p>
<p>2. Review and monitoring arrangements in place.</p>	<p>The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee monitors and scrutinises the performance of the council's services by having regard to a variety of information, including performance indicators, financial information, reports from external inspections, audit reports, and monitoring of action plans. This Committee also acts as the council's audit committee.</p> <p>The Code and associated position statement and development issues are subject to annual review.</p> <p>Both Internal Audit and the external auditors have on-going responsibility for the review of the adequacy of corporate governance arrangements within the council.</p>
<p>3. Committee charged with governance responsibilities</p>	<p>The primary purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services by providing a check on the way the council works, i.e. by acting as a 'critical friend' and addressing the 'corporate health' of the authority as a whole.</p>

	<p>For role of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee see step 3 / objective 1 / 3.</p>
<p>4. Governance training provided to key officers and all members</p>	<p><u>Members</u></p> <p>There is an induction course after each local election, which is open to experienced as well as new members and which includes a section on standards and the Code of Conduct. Members elected at by-elections are encouraged to have a 1:1 session with the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>In the Members’ Bulletin 9 May 2008 members were informed of the new procedure for handling complaints. The Monitoring Officer also gave updates on this at Parish Conferences in April and November 2008.</p> <p>The member induction programme includes two ethics sessions – the first held after elections, with another later on in the year to give members opportunities to raise further queries/_issues. High compliance with the Code of Conduct is indicated by the very small number of complaints of breach made to the Standards Board – since local assessment was introduced the Standards Committee has dealt with 8 complaints, of which one was against a Borough Councillor (and was not upheld). One matter was referred for mediation, which appears to have resolved the problem. Two have been referred for investigation, of which one resulted in a finding of 'no breach' and the other awaits a final decision. The Standards Committee considered that no action was required regarding the other complaints. It should be noted that major changes are proposed to the current Local Authority Standards Regime contained in the Localism Bill, which for local authorities would remove the requirement for them to have a Standards Committee.</p> <p>All new members are assigned a senior officer as a contact.</p> <p>Registers of interests (including gifts and hospitality) are maintained by Democratic Services for members, with interests recorded on the council’s website. Guidance and a proforma for declaring any gifts or hospitality accepted by members is available on the intranet.</p> <p>Members’ declarations of gifts and hospitality are recorded on their Registers of Interest which are on the website. In addition, there is a quarterly report to the Standards Committee stating what declarations have been made in the previous three months.</p> <p>Members are alert to the difficulties that can be caused by unsolicited invitations to receive hospitality. For example, in 2008 one member informed the Monitoring Officer that he had been sent free tickets to three outdoor events. The Monitoring Officer was able to issue advice to all members of the possible pitfalls of going to all or any of these events as the total value was over £25 and members could have compromised their ability to deal with a planning matter in which the organisers are interested.</p> <p><u>Officers</u></p> <p>The employee checklist requires discipline, complaints and grievance procedure, and the equal opportunities policy, to</p>

	<p>be discussed between the employee and human resources on the first day of employment, plus the job role and responsibilities including standards and expectations, to be discussed between the employee and the line manager within the first week of employment.</p> <p>The Employees Code of Conduct is sent out to all new starters and is discussed with new starters on the first day of employment – there is also a specific section in the employment contract referring to the Code of Conduct. A copy is also available on the intranet for staff to refer to.</p> <p>The employee induction checklist includes specific reference to the Code of Conduct, and specifically personal interests, along with a link to Policies and Procedures ('Things you should know about your employment').</p> <p>In respect of registers of gifts and hospitality for staff interests need to be registered as soon as possible (the general expectation would be that under normal circumstances this should be no later than 28 days) of staff receiving any gift or hospitality or the offer of any gift or hospitality, providing written notification to the Corporate Director and, or Head of Service (as appropriate to the Directorate) using the 'Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality' form.</p> <p>A number of messages have been included in the council's internal bulletin to remind staff of their responsibilities regarding declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality; expenses claims and information security. Annual reminders continue to appear in the Members' Bulletin reminding members of the need to report anything within the council they are concerned with.</p>
<p>5. Staff, public and other stakeholders awareness of corporate governance</p>	<p>The council's Code of Corporate Governance is published on the council's intranet and web site. Annual review of compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance is subject to MT and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee review and recommendation for approval.</p>
<p>Step 4: In support of objective 1 – Performance management arrangements are in place</p>	
<p>Examples of Assurance</p>	<p>Council Assessment / Evidence / Action Required</p>
<p>1. Comprehensive and effective performance management systems operate routinely</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan outlines our performance framework, including service plans, performance development review process, and key performance indicators.</p> <p>The Cabinet Annual Report and Corporate Plan have been merged into one document. The Corporate Plan is the bedrock upon which St Edmundsbury's foundations are built and provides the future focus for our service planning and budget setting. It identifies what is most important for the council as a whole and guides our managers as they put together plans for their services in the coming year. The annual report shows how we have built upon those foundations over the past year through a series of Cabinet commitments – our promises to deliver what our residents and businesses tell us is most important to them.</p> <p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p>

	<p>A Performance Management Group is established, its vision to support the Council and its partners to improve performance and value for money for service users.</p>
<p>2. Key performance indicators are established and monitored</p>	<p>The way Local Authorities measure performance has changed significantly over the past year. The National Indicator Set has been abolished and replaced with a single data list of information for Local Authorities to supply to Government.</p> <p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury has recently introduced Covalent Performance Management Software. This system is being used in conjunction with Forest Heath District Council as part the Shared Services Agenda. Covalent is a web based performance management tool that allows for upload of all Performance Indicators. The system currently has the Key Performance Indicators (as reported to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee) and various local indicators for use by individual services. It is anticipated that more services will use the tool for storing/measuring performance overtime. The system also has capacity for project planning, risk management and customer feedback which will be introduced once use of the performance indicator aspect of the system has been embedded.</p> <p>Performance Management Group meets every two months to monitor and review performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.</p> <p>Service plans include setting and monitoring of performance standards and targets.</p>
<p>3. The authority knows how well it is performing against its planned outcomes.</p>	<p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>The council is subject to an annual programme of independent internal and external audits, and statutory inspections. The external auditor reports on the council's governance, performance and accounting arrangements. The borough council received a very positive Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2009/10, published in January 2011 from the Audit Commission. Key messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The council uses a number of different methods of engagement depending on the issue and stakeholders involved. The council can demonstrate that the views of local people are taken into account when determining future developments. ➤ The council's financial standing is sound and it has a track record of performing within budget. The council continues to reinforce the importance of financial planning. ➤ The council continues to develop a range of collaborative arrangements for procurement with other councils and partners. Partnership arrangements have brought value for money, for example, shared waste procurement has led to lower costs and working with Suffolk County Council at West Suffolk House has enabled the council to

	<p>rationalise services and share contract costs.</p> <p>➤ The council performs very well on natural resources. It was the first local authority in Suffolk, and one of the first in the region to review climate change and energy dependency. Benchmarking against other organisations in the region show the council to be the best public sector performer in the region on reducing the impact of climate change.</p> <p>The council's annual budget is the financial process which underlies the delivery of the council's commitments, objectives and services. Budget monitoring reports are sent to budget holders on a monthly basis and also to Management Team with variances greater than £10k highlighted. This format makes significant variances more visible so that timely action can be taken to address them. In addition, budget monitoring reports are reviewed quarterly by Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, with specific focus being given to the variances and an understanding of how and why they have arisen, and what action is being taken to address them.</p> <p>The council is keen to use benchmarking information where appropriate to challenge the use of resources when delivering priorities. The council has subscribed to a number of CIPFA Benchmarking Clubs, for example, treasury management and payroll. In addition, benchmarking comparisons are used to inform reviews which are considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Performance Development Committee and Cabinet.</p> <p>Regular updates are provided on progress towards implementing the council's Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>4. Knowledge of absolute and relative performances achieved is used to support decisions that drive improvements in outcomes</p>	<p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury has recently introduced Covalent Performance Management Software.</p> <p>The Performance Management Group generally meets approximately every two months to monitor and review performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.</p> <p>Service plans include setting and monitoring of performance standards and targets.</p>
<p>5. The authority continuously improves its performance management</p>	<p>See step 1 / objective 4 / 1-4 above.</p>
<p>Step 1: In support of objective 1 – Apply the Six CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principles</p>	
<p>Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area</p>	
<p>The code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:</p>	

<p>1. develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision;</p>	<p>The council identifies and communicates its aims and ambitions for St Edmundsbury through its Corporate Plan and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ sets a clear direction; ❖ identifies our priorities; and ❖ provides a focus for service planning and budget setting. <p>Its vision for the borough is: to improve the quality of life for everyone in St Edmundsbury in a cost effective and efficient manner.</p> <p>Our priorities reflect the needs of the community we represent and serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ raise standards and corporate efficiency; ❖ improve the safety and well being of the community; ❖ secure a sustainable and attractive environment; and ❖ create a prosperous local economy. <p>Our budgets and service plans reflect our priorities, as well as our legal duties. However, we take seriously our responsibility to the local taxpayer, and our duty to provide the many services upon which the community depends. Therefore, our priorities, and specifically the Cabinet's commitments, have to be realistic in terms of raising expectations and ensuring value for money. This means that we can only focus new energy and resources in a limited number of places at any one time. It is not possible to achieve all of our priorities in a single year; delivery of some of the more complex initiatives will take several years. We will also continue to work with others to meet the challenges facing our borough.</p>
<p>2. review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its impact on the authority's governance arrangements;</p>	<p>The council has approved a Corporate Code of Governance in line with CIPFA / SOLACE guidance. The Code is accompanied by a position statement which compares the council's current governance with CIPFA / SOLACE guidance, and identifies areas for further consideration and development.</p> <p>The Code of Corporate Governance was last revised in 2010, and is published on both the council's website and intranet.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury, along with its partners, is in the process of setting out its long term strategic objectives in Vision 2031. This will update the existing long term vision set out in Vision 2025.</p>
<p>3. ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties;</p>	<p>The council has a clear, shared vision for the borough on what matters most to local people and this has informed its community ambitions and priorities. The council's ambitions reflect regional and local need and are informed by good consultation with partners, stakeholders and communities.</p> <p>The council's ambitions provide long, medium and short-term focus for activities to be delivered via a range of plans and partnerships. Vision 2025 sets the change programme for the long-term, although it will be replaced by Vision 2031.</p> <p>The council has a Code of Corporate Governance, which is reviewed on an annual basis ensuring that the council's</p>

	<p>governance arrangements are in place and are demonstrating good outcomes for the community and service users through good risk management, performance, financial and internal control processes.</p> <p>With regard to partnerships governance see objective 1 / step 2 / 5.</p>
<p>4. publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance;</p>	<p>The Cabinet Annual Report and Corporate Plan have been put together in one document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Corporate Plan is the bedrock upon which St Edmundsbury's foundations are built and provides the future focus for our service planning and budget setting. It identifies what is most important for the council as a whole and guides our managers as they put together plans for their services in the coming year. ❖ The annual report shows how we have built upon those foundations over the past year through a series of Cabinet commitments – our promises to deliver what our residents and businesses tell us is most important to them. ❖ In addition, the document includes the summary statement of accounts which provides an overall financial position of the council. <p>An annual audited Statement of Accounts is produced showing the council's financial position. Whilst full details of finances are included within the Statement of Accounts an annual financial summary is also prepared which summarises some of the key elements of the council's finances i.e. where the money comes from, what we spend it on, what we own and what we owe. Both documents are published on the council's website.</p>
<p>5. decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available;</p>	<p>The council identifies and communicates its aims and ambitions for St Edmundsbury through its Corporate Plan. It also recognises that all effective organisations measure their performance in order to know how well they are doing and to identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>Service plans - information about how services will deliver the council's duties and priorities is included in service plans. These plans provide basic resource information, such as number of staff and financial status, and show how each service contributes to the council's priorities. More importantly they set out the key issues for the future and reflect the risks facing each service and the council and how services are working with their colleagues at Forest Heath District Council. Service plans are also a vital tool in delivering the Workforce Development Plan for staff, showing existing delivery plans and also allowing teams to identify future staffing issues.</p> <p>The service planning and budget process have been aligned so that service plans reflect the council's agreed budget. This helps to focus on our priorities and ensure that they can be delivered within available resources.</p> <p>Performance Development Review - a key part of the council's performance management framework is the performance development review process for all staff resulting in action plans and personal development plans which are reviewed twice a year. Through this process, staff demonstrate how their work links to the achievement of the council's priorities. The process also allows each team to produce a learning and development plan for its staff.</p> <p>The council has a process to manage corporate complaints, with a bi-annual digest of complaints to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. Reports to this Committee set out the number of corporate complaints received, details of the council's response times to those complaints, a breakdown of the complaints by Directorate and also details of any</p>

	<p>compliments and comments received.</p> <p>The way local authorities measure performance has changed significantly over the past year. The National Indicator Set has been abolished and replaced with a single data list of information for Local Authorities to supply to Government.</p> <p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury has recently introduced Covalent Performance Management Software.</p> <p>Performance Management Group meets every two months to monitor and review performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.</p> <p>Service plans include setting and monitoring of performance standards and targets.</p> <p>The council's overall financial arrangements are governed by the Medium Term Financial Strategy which sets out the financial framework for delivery of the council's priorities, by providing a strategic overview of its financial standing over a rolling five year period. The Medium Term Financial Strategy supports longer term financial forecasting and decision making and takes into account all significant financial inflows and outflows. The Strategy is reviewed by Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Public bodies are accountable for the public money they spend. The financial and performance information they use to account for their activities, both internally and externally, to their users, partners, commissioners, government departments and regulators, must be appropriate for these purposes, providing the level of accuracy, reliability and consistency required. The council recognises the importance of reliable information to the delivery of excellent customer services. Data quality is crucial and the availability of complete, accurate and timely data is important in supporting customer care, corporate governance, management and service agreements for service planning and accountability. The council has adopted a Data Quality Policy, which is kept under review and amended as necessary to reflect any changes in national standards or requirements.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have produced an information sharing protocol in respect of the shared services agenda. As a part of the initiative both parties are sharing data to facilitate improved service delivery. The protocol sets out the minimum rules for sharing information.</p>
<p>6. put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery;</p>	<p>Surveys and a formal complaints procedure allow the council to gauge customer satisfaction with regard to the effectiveness of service delivery, as follows:</p> <p>Managing complaints from the council's customers is a crucial part of the council's overall approach to customer</p>

	<p>service. When a customer perceives that a service has not met expectations it is important that the council deals with their complaint in a timely, accurate and honest fashion. How the council deals with the complaint can often be as important as whether the complaint is upheld. Conversely, mishandling a complaint can often escalate that complaint. The council has a rigorous process in place to manage these corporate complaints, this includes a twice yearly review by the Performance & Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p>
<p>7. decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.</p>	<p>The council's Corporate Planning process follows the 'golden thread' approach which links its priorities from the West Suffolk Community Strategy and Suffolk Community Strategy down to individual Performance Development Reviews. The council has a corporate mission of 'achieving excellence', which is underpinned by four corporate priorities, which have been cascaded throughout the authority and to partner organisations. Partner organisations were involved in the development of the West Suffolk Community Strategy and the council's Vision 2025.</p> <p>Securing efficiency and value for money remains a high priority for the council with an over-riding commitment to improving efficiency. One of the four corporate priorities being 'to raise corporate standards and efficiency'.</p> <p>The council is overall a relatively high spending council in comparison to others. However the level of spending reflects the fact that we are an ambitious council and deliver a wide range of services and capital projects, in a largely rural area with two major centres of population.</p> <p>The work of the council is geared to achieving these priorities and commitments. Resources are allocated accordingly. The council's track record of achieving efficiency savings shows how it achieves and improves value for money delivering a wide range of services with some services amongst the best in the country.</p> <p>Value for Money is measured by benchmarking performance and costs. The council subscribes to a number of CIPFA Benchmarking Clubs, for example, payroll, debtors and internal audit. Participation in benchmarking clubs identifies areas where scores are favourable compared against other authorities as well as those areas which do not perform as favourably, along with identifying potential areas for improvement.</p> <p>The council uses Environmental Impact Assessments to measure the impact of its policies, plans and decisions. Management Team receives a quarterly Environmental Management progress report.</p> <p>The council has adopted an innovative approach to achieving efficiencies through service reviews and the DR-IVE programme. The Dynamic Review – Innovation, Value and Enterprise (DR-IVE) process to ensure that efficiency savings are met, led by portfolio holders, staff and scrutiny committees. Our DR-IVE process was recognised when we received a commendation by the Municipal Journal Achievement Awards in June 2006.</p>

	<p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p>
<p>Step 2: In support of objective 1 – Apply the Six CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principles</p>	
<p>Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles</p>	
<p>The local code should reflect the requirements of local authorities to:</p>	
<p>1. set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice (this is not relevant for the police service);</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council has adopted a Constitution which sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Specific key areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Articles of the Constitution which explain the different parts of the decision-making structure and how the council will operate; ❖ Responsibility for Functions which indicates which councillors and officers are responsible for certain decisions; and ❖ Rules of Procedure which set out the way meetings will be run and the procedures for various council functions. <p>Meetings are open to the public except where personal, confidential or commercially sensitive matters are being discussed and all decisions made within these bodies are ratified by Full Council.</p> <p>Any amendments or updates to the Constitution are agreed as and when required through the Democratic Renewal Panel, unless there is another way of approving them through the democratic process, for example licensing matters will be considered by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee. The Constitution document is usually updated on an annual basis.</p>
<p>2. set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers;</p>	<p>As above, the Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. Included within the Constitution is a Protocol for Member and Officer Relations.</p> <p>A Contract of Employment will be issued on appointment, which contain appropriate conditions of employment i.e. salary, pension, probation, working hours and annual leave etc.</p>
<p>3. determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority taking account of relevant legislation and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required;.</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. One key area being responsibility for functions which indicates which councillors and officers are responsible for certain decisions.</p> <p>The Constitution document also includes a Scheme of Delegation for Officers, plus Rules of Procedure, namely, Financial Procedure Rules and Contracts Procedure Rules.</p> <p>The council also has a Scheme of Financial Delegation, which sets out in detail exactly what financial responsibilities are delegated and to whom, and what controls are in place for each area of responsibility. The appendix sets out a list of named budget holders.</p>

<p>4. make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management;</p>	<p>The council's Constitution sets out the roles of Chief Officers and Statutory Officers and the scheme of delegation, specifically the Chief Executive who is the council's principal advisor on policy issues and the Head of Paid Service.</p> <p>An Officer Appointments Committee exists to deal with appointment, discipline and termination of employment of Chief Officers. The Committee meets only on an ad hoc basis as and when required.</p> <p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. One key area being responsibility for functions which indicates which councillors and officers are responsible for certain decisions.</p> <p>Corporate Management Team meets on a weekly basis and consists of the Chief Officers, namely, Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>Management Team (including the Corporate Management Team) also meets on a weekly basis. Cabinet and Corporate Management Team meet fortnightly throughout the year and when Cabinet holds Development Days they are joined by the Corporate Management Team for part of the day.</p> <p>Officers are issued with job descriptions providing a written description of the responsibilities and requirements of a specific job.</p> <p>A Contract of Employment will be issued on appointment, with both sides then bound by its terms until it's properly ended or until the terms have changed.</p> <p>Annual performance appraisal of all staff with an individual assessment used as the basis of a reward system for staff who can positively contribute to the overall values and objectives of the council.</p>
<p>5. develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained;</p>	<p>To reinforce the working relationships between Cabinet and senior officers, the council has developed a Cabinet/Corporate Management Team protocol which provides a framework for effective working at the political interface and can be used to challenge unhealthy behaviours.</p> <p>The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development has conducted a review of learning and development needs with Cabinet members. This involved individual interviews with Cabinet members seeking their views about how effective the working relationships were between Corporate Management Team and Cabinet, within Cabinet and between Cabinet members and their portfolio holders. The feedback revealed a picture of generally positive working relationships.</p>
<p>6. make a senior officer (usually the section 151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an</p>	<p>The Constitution sets out the roles of Chief Officers and Statutory Officers. Specifically, the Chief Finance Officer is Section 151 Officer of the Local Government Act 1972 and is responsible for making sure that appropriate advice is given to the council on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p>

<p>effective system of internal financial control;</p>	
<p>7. make a senior officer (other than the Responsible Financial Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations are complied with;</p>	<p>The Constitution sets out the roles of Chief Officers and Statutory Officers. Specifically, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services is the Monitoring Officer and the Proper Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act (except where signified under other officer delegations) and the Registration Service Act 1953 and is responsible for the administration of the council's political management structures.</p>
<p>8. develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles;</p>	<p>The Constitution sets out the roles of Chief Officers and Statutory Officers. Included within the Constitution is a Protocol for Member and Officer Relations.</p>
<p>9. set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable);</p>	<p>The council aims to make sure its recruitment practices are fair, open and effective so that the council can recruit the right people to help it achieve its goals and objectives.</p> <p>An Officer Appointments Committee exists to deal with appointment, discipline and termination of employment of Chief Officers. The Committee meets only on an ad hoc basis as and when required.</p> <p>A Contract of Employment will be issued on appointment, with both sides then bound by its terms until it's properly ended or until the terms have changed.</p> <p>Annual performance appraisal of all staff with an individual assessment used as the basis of a reward system for staff who can positively contribute to the overall values and objectives of the council.</p> <p>For members, the Members' Allowance Scheme details the allowances paid to councillors. It is subject to annual review by the Independent Remuneration Panel.</p>
<p>10. ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery;</p>	<p>In order to ensure that the council is delivering its priorities, the council is continually developing its corporate planning and performance framework. The key objectives of the framework are to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ a culture of achievement; ❖ that priorities influence, and flow from, the West Suffolk Community Strategy and the Suffolk Community Strategy; ❖ performance against targets are monitored effectively; ❖ short, medium and long term priorities are agreed and regularly reviewed; ❖ objectives and activities in service plans are consistent with corporate priorities; ❖ performance against key performance indicators is monitored and reported regularly, and action is taken to correct any shortfall in performance; and ❖ resources needed to achieve targets are identified and allocated. <p>A Performance Management Group is established, its vision to support the council and its partners to improve performance and value for money for service users. The group meets every two months to monitor and review</p>

	<p>performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.</p> <p>Annual performance appraisal of all staff with an individual assessment used as the basis of a reward system for staff who can positively contribute to the overall values and objectives of the council</p>
<p>11. ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated;</p>	<p>The council identifies and communicates its aims and ambitions for St Edmundsbury through its Corporate Plan. The council's priorities are based on local need and consultation with the community and partners, having reflected its ambitions for the community in its corporate priorities.</p> <p>These priorities link to the ambitions set out around rural isolation, young and elderly groups within the community, economic growth, housing growth and improving internal processes and capacity. There are clear links into the Community Strategy, Vision 2025, and cabinet commitments which cascade from the Corporate Plan into Service Plans and individual targets as set out in the performance development review.</p> <p>The council's overall financial arrangements are governed by the Medium Term Financial Strategy which sets out the financial framework for delivery of the council's priorities.</p> <p>This is supported by robust budget setting and monitoring arrangements and the Financial Procedure Rules which form part of the Constitution. All spending services / sections are required to monitor budgets on a monthly basis, in consultation with the Finance Section. Spending departments / sections are responsible for their income and expenditure and are therefore accountable to members for their budgets.</p>
<p>12. when working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority;</p>	<p>Officers will always assist / brief councillors who are involved in partnerships.</p> <p>Regarding partnerships governance please refer to objective 1 / step 2 / 5.</p>
<p>13. when working in partnership: - ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership - ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partners decisions.</p>	<p>List of partnerships is available.</p> <p>The council is involved in a number of partnership arrangements, including work with Havebury Housing, Abbeycroft Leisure, Haverhill Town Council (re Haverhill Town Hall and Arts Centre), Theatre Royal, Guildhall and West Stow trustees.</p> <p>Governance arrangements for these partnerships are subject to on-going review, as appropriate, with funding agreements being reviewed on at least an annual basis. Regular liaison meetings take place with key partners, including Havebury Housing and Abbeycroft Leisure. Increasingly, partnership working through the West Suffolk Community Strategy is taking prominence and the council takes reports to Cabinet on the governance arrangements for this work or is involved in governance decisions at Partnership Board Meetings.</p>

	<p>Regarding partnerships governance please refer to objective 1 / step 2 / 5.</p> <p>A memorandum of understanding has been drawn up between St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, in respect of the shared services agenda. The purpose of the document is to demonstrate to the public, councillors and staff how the two councils will work together to maintain service levels, increase resilience and deliver services at lower costs to residents, businesses and visitors in West Suffolk.</p>
<p>Step 3: In support of objective 1 – Apply the Six CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principles</p>	
<p>Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour</p>	
<p>The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:</p>	
<p>1. ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect;</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. Specifically, Part 4 Rules of Procedure set out the way meetings will be run and the procedures for various council functions.</p> <p>Legal advice is provided to ensure that the council operates the principles of good administrative law.</p> <p>Reports to members are formally considered for legal issues before presentation by the council's Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Meetings are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed.</p>
<p>2. ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols;</p>	<p>The Members' Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Employees and the Member/Officer Protocol are all incorporated within the council's Constitution. The documents are in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ define the standards of personal behaviour individual councillors, officers, and agents of the council must follow; and ❖ ensure that elected councillors and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. <p>Codes and Protocols are issued to all staff on appointment and reinforced as part of the induction process.</p> <p>A key part of the council's performance management framework is the Performance Development Review. Through this process, officers demonstrate how their work links to the achievement of our priorities.</p> <p>The council is committed to combating fraud and corruption whether it is attempted from outside or from within the council. The council has a responsibility to protect public funds and has developed an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy to encourage prevention, promote detection and identify procedures for investigation. It is available on both the council's website and intranet.</p> <p>A number of messages are included annually in the council's internal bulletin to remind staff of their responsibilities</p>

	<p>regarding declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality; expenses claims and information security. In addition, annual reminders are sent to members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p> <p>The council has a rigorous process in place to manage corporate complaints, with a bi-annual digest of complaints to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Regarding partnership governance please refer to objective 1 / step 2 / 5.</p>
<p>3. put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice;</p>	<p>As above, the Members' Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Employees and the Member/Officer Protocol are all incorporated within the council's Constitution. Both the Members and Employees Code of Conducts are a way of ensuring the business of the council is undertaken in a professional manner and clarifies and reinforces expected local government ethical standards.</p> <p>Members receive copies of the meeting agendas in advance. As one of the agenda items for each meeting, the members are required to declare any interests at the outset of the meeting.</p> <p>The management of the council's financial affairs is conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.</p> <p>Every contract made by the council should comply with the Contract Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution. Both are published on the council's intranet and web site.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Guide is a guide for staff, councillors and others closely involved with the council (including contractors, suppliers and partner organisations) with suspicion of the existence of fraud or corruption. The guide is published on the council's intranet and web site, and encourages anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of the council's work to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of harassment, victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.</p> <p>A number of messages are included annually in the council's internal bulletin to remind staff of their responsibilities regarding declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality; expenses claims and information security. In addition, annual reminders are sent to members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p>
<p>4. develop and maintain shared values including leadership values both for the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners;</p>	<p>The council prides itself on its values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity, and expects its employees and councillors to perform their duties with regard to these values.</p> <p>Employees and councillors are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public. The council has adopted a Members Code of Conduct along with an Employees Code of Conduct which all councillors and employees respectively are bound by. The Codes are a way of ensuring the business of local authorities is undertaken in a</p>

	<p>professional manner and clarifies and reinforces the ethical standards in local government. It defines a set of practical guidelines, clearly setting out member and employee responsibilities as representatives of the residents of St Edmundsbury and that appropriate interests in jobs, property and businesses are declared.</p> <p>A copy of the Members Code of Conduct is available on the council’s website, plus information should a member of the public wish to complain about a councillor.</p>
<p>5. put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.;</p>	<p>See above (4). Both the Members and Employees Code of Conducts are a way of ensuring the business of the council is undertaken in a professional manner and clarifies and reinforces the ethical standards in local government.</p>
<p>6. develop and maintain an effective standards committee;</p>	<p>A Standards Committee is in place. It comprises of three councillors; three independent members (people who are not councillors or officers of the council or any other body having a Standards Committee); and three members of parish/town councils wholly or mainly in the council’s area (Parish Members).</p> <p>Its roles and functions include promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors, assisting councillors to observe the Members Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Members Code of Conduct and overseeing matters referred to the Monitoring Officer by an Ethical Standards Officer of the National Standards Board.</p>
<p>7. use the organisations shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority;</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. Specifically, the Articles of Constitution explain the different parts of the decision-making structure and how the council will operate.</p> <p>Forward plans are prepared by the Leader to cover a period of four months. The forward plan contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken by the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet, individual members of the Cabinet, officers or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an Executive function during the period covered by the plan.</p> <p>Reports to Council and Cabinet are formally considered for legal issues by the council's Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Reminders are sent by Democratic Services advising key officers to submit draft reports for Cabinet by a set timescale to ensure that Management Team have the opportunity to consider them prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Meetings are open to the public except where personal, confidential or commercially sensitive matters are being discussed.</p>
<p>8. in pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values</p>	<p>Regarding partnerships governance see objective 1 / step 2 / 5.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury recognises the importance of partnership working and the benefits it can bring in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services for local people and achieving more efficient use of resources.</p>

<p>must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.</p>	<p>A Partnership Strategy has been developed to help ensure that the council's partnerships are formed, monitored and reviewed with the appropriate level of governance arrangements in place to achieve better outcomes.</p> <p>This strategy is written in two parts:- (1) the key principles for ensuring a successful partnership, the definition of a partnership, including significant partnerships and why we work in partnership; and (2) partnership governance arrangements, toolkits to assess whether a partnership should be entered into and the methods for reviewing existing partnerships.</p> <p>A memorandum of understanding has been drawn up between St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, in respect of the shared services agenda. The purpose of the document is to demonstrate to the public, councillors and staff how the two councils will work together to maintain service levels, increase resilience and deliver services at lower costs to residents, businesses and visitors in West Suffolk.</p>
<p>Step 4: In support of objective 1 – Apply the Six CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principles</p>	
<p>Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk</p>	
<p>The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:</p>	
<p>1. develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the organisation's performance overall and of any organisation for which it is responsible;</p>	<p>The council has several Committees which carry out regulatory or scrutiny functions, with scrutiny at St Edmundsbury classed externally as being a strength of the council. The scrutiny committees help the Cabinet review, interpret and implement the council's policies. The scrutiny programmes, while independent, are therefore closely linked to the Cabinet's commitments. The Annual Scrutiny Report sets out achievements and explains the future work programme.</p> <p>The council had a very full programme of work in respect of the scrutiny committees, the detail of which will be set out in the Scrutiny Annual Report. One significant piece of work carried out during 2010/11 jointly by all three committees was a review of the council's scrutiny structure. Various options for a re-focus of the council's scrutiny structure were considered, and all three committees agreed that the preferred structure should involve the removal of the Policy Development Committee, with policy reviews being carried out by "task and finish" groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the budget responsibilities of Policy Development Committee (such as DR-IVE and Policy Based Budgeting) transferring to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. After 9 years of almost as many scrutiny models as there are councils, this model, of one over-arching scrutiny committee running task and finish groups to carry out scrutiny and policy reviews, is becoming the preferred model of scrutiny across many councils.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services by providing a check on the way the council works, i.e. by acting as a 'critical friend' and addressing the 'corporate health' of the authority as a whole.</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Structures and responsibilities are as follows:</p>

	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Agrees Scrutiny Work Programme, Annual Report from Cabinet and Cabinet Forward Plans, Reports from Panels, Local Strategic Partnership, Local Area Assessment, External and Joint Scrutiny, Post-implementation reviews, Council Improvement Plan and Corporate Planning, Call-ins, Councillor Call for Action, Scrutiny Improvement Plan, Reviews and Policy Development, and Diversity.</p> <p>The creation, in 2007/08, of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee has enabled the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to take a more proactive role in carrying out reviews across the council, and has given the Committee time to be able to carry out more post implementation reviews of earlier recommendations, enabling stronger challenge of the decision making process. It has also been able to further progress its community leadership role. An extensive list of the work undertaken by the committees each year in a joint Annual Report.</p> <p>Another example of work carried out during 2010/11 was the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s review of the progress of the Tree and Woodland Strategy which had been adopted the year before. The Committee was pleased to be able to report that the management of the Council’s tree stock was now performed in accordance with an inspection and maintenance programme which saw all Council-maintained trees inspected and maintained at least once every four years. This new proactive management and programmed maintenance regime had resulted in a reduction in enquiries to the service, making the budget spend on tree work equally split between proactive and reactive management. The long term, and in the Committee’s view, achievable aim, is to see a level of 70% planned management.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a variety of ways in which to challenge the Cabinet, the obvious one being via the call-in process, although members use this mechanism sparingly, which can be taken as a sign that the decision making process is working as it should.</p> <p>There were no call-ins during 2010/11. The Centre for Public Scrutiny’s 2009 survey of overview and scrutiny in local government showed that the average number of call-ins annually (across all council tiers) was 2.5. Since the introduction of scrutiny St Edmundsbury has had on average one call-in per year. We see this as a positive indication that the call-in process is being used as it should be, that is, as a tool of last resort, and that our decision-making bodies are trusted by the scrutiny process to take decisions in accordance with the principles of good decision making, and the council’s budget and policy framework</p> <p>The new CCfA power came into being in April 2010, and during its first year of operation the new power was enthusiastically taken up at St Edmundsbury, with four CCfAs being brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These CCfAs concerned long-standing issues which the referring Members wished to try this new route to resolve. During 2010/11 no further CCfAs have been brought to the Committee; this may be because most issues are resolved through existing routes open to Members.</p> <p>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Areas of interest include key performance indicators review, quarterly budget monitoring, approval of annual accounts,</p>
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	<p>biannual complaints digest, inspections, internal and external audit, and risk management</p> <p>During 2010/11 the scrutiny function provided challenge to the authority in a variety of ways. The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee monitored performance indicators, the corporate risk register, and monitored the budget on a quarterly basis. Corporate complaints are monitored twice yearly, and the Committee also considered the results of inspections, with representatives from the Audit Commission attending the Committee periodically.</p> <p>This Committee also acts as a specific Audit Committee and has specific terms of reference which reflect this.</p>
<p>2. develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based;</p>	<p>Article 12 of the Constitution states that the council will issue, and keep up-to-date, a record of what part of the council or individual has responsibility for particular types of decisions and decisions relating to particular areas of functions. This record is set out in Part 3 of the Constitution. In addition, Part 4 of the Constitution Rules of Procedure includes guidance on meeting minutes, for example, approval and signing and form of minutes.</p> <p>Regarding Forward plans, see step 3 / objective / 7.</p> <p>All constitutional meetings of the council are supported by trained committee staff to ensure accurate minute taking and agreed procedures are followed.</p> <p>In general a good committee report providing relevant and concise management information will ensure a good decision is made.</p> <p>Reminders are sent by Democratic Services advising key officers to submit draft reports for Cabinet by a set timescale to ensure that Management Team have the opportunity to consider them prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Reports to Council and Cabinet are formally considered for legal issues by the council's Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer will use statutory powers to report to Full Council where there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures, for example a planning decision.</p> <p>Meetings are open to the public except where personal, confidential or commercially sensitive matters are being discussed.</p> <p>A key element of the scrutiny role of the new Committee concerns the arrangements for the "call-in" of a decision taken by or on behalf of the Cabinet. Call-in should only be used in exceptional circumstances. These are where members have evidence which suggests that the Cabinet decision was not taken in accordance with the principles set out in Article 12 (Decision Making). The council uses this mechanism sparingly, which can be taken as a sign that the decision making process is working as it should. There were no calls in during 2010/11.</p>
<p>3. put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees</p>	<p>The Members' Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Employees and the Member/Officer Protocol are all incorporated within the council's Constitution. The documents are in place to:</p>

<p>against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ define the standards of personal behaviour individual councillors, officers, and agents of the council must follow; and ❖ ensure that elected councillors and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. <p>Registers of interests (including gifts and hospitality) are maintained by Democratic Services for members, with interests recorded on the council's website and the Chief Executive's Office for employees.</p> <p>In summary, interests need to be registered as soon as possible (the general expectation would be that under normal circumstances this should be no later than 28 days) of staff receiving any gift or hospitality or the offer of any gift or hospitality, providing written notification to the Corporate Director and, or Head of Service (as appropriate to the Directorate) using the 'Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality' form.</p> <p>The management of the council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution. The council also has a Scheme of Financial Delegation.</p> <p>Every contract made by the council should comply with the Contract Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution. These are published on the council's intranet and web site.</p>
<p>4. develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee;</p>	<p>The primary purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to improve the delivery of policies and services by providing a check on the way the council works, i.e. by acting as a 'critical friend' and addressing the 'corporate health' of the authority as a whole.</p> <p>The Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee is the council's designated audit committee, and has 7 members. The committee is independent from the executive function, with terms of reference and delegations included within Part 3 of the council's constitution.</p> <p>The work of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee is a major aspect of the council's corporate governance framework. Its primary role is to act as the council's audit committee with the following terms of reference and delegations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ contributing to the council's governance by ensuring an effective internal control environment is maintained; ❖ reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal audit; ❖ reviewing the mechanisms for the assessment and management of risk; ❖ endorsing a work plan for Internal Audit; ❖ receiving periodic reports on the work of Internal Audit; ❖ considering recommendations and reports from external auditors; ❖ considering arrangements for and the merits of operating quality assurance and performance management processes; and

	<p>❖ scrutiny and recommendation for approval of the council's statement of accounts.</p> <p>Having a specialised team of members has been of value when important issues such as the annual accounts and Code of Corporate Governance have needed attention, and the Audit Commission have also benefited from having a dedicated group of members to present their regular reports to.</p> <p>Members of the Committees participate in specific training provided to them for the scrutiny function. Short training sessions (for example, risk management, international financial reporting standards, national fraud initiative) have taken place involving members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, to raise awareness of topics and to keep abreast of any new developments. During 2010/11 members of the Committee, and in particular its Treasury Management Sub-Committee, received extensive committee-specific training. Much of this training was carried out internally, and four Members also attended an external event, "Local Authority Treasury Management explained".</p>
<p>5. put in place effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints;</p>	<p>Managing complaints from customers is a crucial part of the council's overall approach to customer service. The council has a two step process for complaints which is outlined below:</p> <p>STEP 1 - this should be the starting point for any complaint if the complainant has not contacted us regarding this complaint previously. The complaint should be investigated by the responsible service and a response given to the complainant. If the complainant has been in contact as part of normal casework previously, it is good practice that a different officer investigates the complaint.</p> <p>STEP 2 - if the complainant is not satisfied with a step 1 response the complaint will be escalated to step 2 of the process. The complaint will now be investigated by Legal and Democratic Services who will give an explanation of how the situation has been handled and the investigations that have taken place.</p> <p>If after having received a step 2 response the complainant is not happy with the response then they can choose to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.</p> <p>A Biannual Corporate Complaints Digest is provided to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. The aim of the digest is to provide an overview of the quantity and type of corporate complaints that the council receives, as well as monitoring effectiveness at responding and learning from any mistakes that have been made.</p> <p>Corporate "Complaints, Comments and Suggestions" procedure and guidance notes and associated forms are available on the intranet and the council's web site.</p>
<p>6. ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical</p>	<p>Induction training courses for members are provided after each election which are open to experienced as well as new members, and include a section on standards, ethics and codes of conduct.</p> <p>A standard template for Cabinet Reports has been produced which contains standard headings, for example, legal or policy implications, risk assessment, resource implications, consultation and community impact.</p>

<p>issues and their implications;</p>	<p>Reports to Council and Cabinet are formally considered for legal issues by the council's Monitoring Officer. Reminders are sent by Democratic Services advising key officers to submit draft reports for Cabinet by a set timescale to ensure that Management Team have the opportunity to consider them prior to the meeting.</p> <p>In general a good committee report providing relevant and concise management information will ensure a good decision is made. A template is provided to ensure that key issues are considered and presented to Cabinet. The Monitoring Officer will use statutory powers to report to Full Council where there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures, for example a planning decision.</p>
<p>7. ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately;</p>	<p>Function mainly fulfilled by the statutory roles of the council's Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) and Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>Within service areas staff will monitor the introduction of legislation specific to their expertise. Where legislation has a corporate or cross-cutting effect, Legal Services will generally co-ordinate dissemination of information and training.</p> <p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. Specifically, Part 4 Rules of Procedure sets out the way meetings will be run and the procedures for various council functions.</p> <p>Management Team also receives briefings on new issues or legislation. A standing item is included on the agenda.</p> <p>Reports to Council and Cabinet are formally considered for legal issues and financial implications by the council's Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer respectively.</p> <p>Reminders are sent by Democratic Services advising key officers to submit draft reports for Cabinet by a set timescale to ensure that Management Team have the opportunity to consider them prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer will use statutory powers to report to Full Council where there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures, for example a planning decision.</p>
<p>8. ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the organisation, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job;</p>	<p>The Audit Commission (as the Council's external auditors) have previously stated that they consider the council's arrangements for risk management to be embedded (Audit and Inspection Letter 2008).</p> <p>The council has formally adopted a Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development is the lead member for risk management and attends the quarterly Strategic Risk Management Group.</p> <p>Within its terms of reference the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee will monitor and scrutinise the</p>

	<p>performance of the council's services by having regard to a variety of information, including performance indicators, financial information, reports from external inspections, audit reports, and monitoring of action plans. With specific reference to risk management the Committee provides assurance of the effectiveness of the corporate risk assessment process and monitors the effective development and operation of risk management policies in the council, specifically including monitoring of the Risk Management Strategy and the corporate risk register.</p> <p>The management of the council's financial affairs are conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.</p> <p>Under the code of corporate governance the council is obliged to ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the council, with members and managers at all levels recognising that managing potential and actual risks is part of their role.</p> <p>As part of this function the council undertakes a quarterly review of its strategic risks. These risks are those which could significantly affect the council's ability to perform and deliver services both currently and in the future. Once risks have been identified and rated suitable actions are identified which will reduce or eliminate that risk.</p> <p>The risk register review process is that members of the Strategic Risk Management Group, made up of senior officers and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for risk consider the register and amend, add or delete as appropriate. A new draft register is then considered by Management Team, where officers from all services have the opportunity to suggest amendments. The approved draft register is presented to members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis for consideration and amendment, after which it becomes the final version and is used as a basis for planning council activities.</p> <p>The emerging issues which present reputational risks to the authority are regularly reviewed by Management Team and reported at the Cabinet / Corporate Management Team meeting on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>Risk awareness / management is at the heart of the project management process. All major projects are risk reviewed on a regular basis at meetings of the project board. A consideration of the project risks is undertaken using an agreed scoring mechanism (included within the project initiation form) - the result of this then determines whether a full risk register is required for that project.</p> <p>Partnerships and risk is specifically referred to within the revised Risk Management Strategy. The council's partnership strategy refers to 'robust risk assessment' as one of the key principles for the success of any partnership. Any identified partnership must draw up a joint risk register, and for the council the Lead Officer for the partnership is responsible for ensuring that the register is kept up to date, and that any corporate issues resulting from the risk register are included in the corporate risk register.</p> <p>The 'Leadership and Managing Others' competency that forms part of the Performance Development Review process includes greater responsibility for risk management.</p>
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	<p>Corporate risk management will continue to form part of the council's induction for new staff, to ensure that all staff joining the council have a broad understanding of how risk is managed within the authority.</p> <p>Risk management training was presented to the members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee at the April 2009 meeting. In addition, presentations by the Corporate Risk Manager at the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee meetings of the corporate risk register include an element of training, for example, advice on the areas of risk which members should focus their attention and questions on – new risks, 'red' risks etc and any explanations of any new templates and headings.</p> <p>New and more concise risk management guidance for managers has been produced and an online risk management training module designed to improve the general level of understanding of risk management across the organisation.</p> <p>The need for specific training courses on risk management for members and officers is being kept under review by the Strategic Risk Management Group.</p>
<p>9. ensure that arrangements are in place for Whistle blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access;</p>	<p>The council's Whistleblowing Guide which is published on the council's intranet and website is a guide for staff, councillors and others closely involved with the council (including contractors, suppliers and partner organisations) with suspicion of the existence of fraud or corruption.</p> <p>The Head of Legal and Democratic Services (the council's Monitoring Officer) has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the guide.</p> <p>Reminders are sent to staff at least annually and members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p>
<p>10. actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities;</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer will use statutory powers to report to Full Council where there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures, for example a planning decision.</p> <p>Responsibilities for statutory obligations are contained within Part 3 of the Constitution – Responsibility for Functions.</p> <p>Part 4 Rules of Procedure set out the way meetings will be run and the procedures for various council functions. Specifically, Executive Procedure Rules describe how the role of Cabinet operates and how its meetings are conducted.</p> <p>In respect of committee report templates this is an area that has been raised in an internal audit report and actions taken in this respect are monitored through the normal audit process.</p>
<p>11. recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law;</p>	<p>Within service areas officers will monitor the introduction of legislation specific to their expertise. Where legislation has a corporate or cross-cutting effect, Legal Services will generally co-ordinate dissemination of information and training. Alternatively, training may be provided by the specialist area.</p> <p>Reports to Full Council and Cabinet are formally considered for legal issues by the council's Monitoring Officer.</p>

	<p>Reminders are sent by Democratic Services advising key officers to submit draft reports for Cabinet by a set timescale to ensure that Management Team have the opportunity to consider them prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer will use statutory powers to report to Full Council where there has been non-compliance with legislation or with the council's own procedures, for example a planning decision.</p>
<p>12. observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice into their procedures and decision making processes.</p>	<p>The Constitution sets out the roles of Chief Officers and Statutory Officers. Specifically, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services acts as the Solicitor to the council and as the Monitoring Officer of the council (under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government Act 2000 and as defined in the Articles and Rules of Procedure of this Constitution) and is responsible for legal advice provided to the council.</p> <p>Officers are issued with job descriptions providing a written description of the responsibilities and requirements of a specific job.</p> <p>See also 10 and 11 above.</p>
<p>Step 5 – In support of Objective 1 – Apply the six CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principles</p>	
<p>Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective</p>	
<p>The local code should reflect the requirements for local authorities to:</p>	
<p>1. provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis;</p>	<p>As a council we want to ensure that our employees / members have the right knowledge, skills and motivation to work effectively.</p> <p>Induction and training programmes are in place for both members and staff. Induction training courses for members are provided after each election and are open to experienced as well as new members. Training includes a section on standards, ethics and codes of conduct.</p> <p>Corporate induction days are held for new staff joining the council, the most recent being November 2010. Its aim to provide an overview of the corporate vision and priorities of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, an understanding of activities across the council and how staff fit into these, plus customer care and service provision within an equality and diversity framework.</p> <p>All staff employed by the council are subject to a Performance Development Review at which performance is measured against set objectives.</p> <p>Training needs are also identified as part of this process and addressed via either the HR service and/or the individual section as appropriate. Staff are actively encouraged to apply for training through the Performance Development Review process. Budgets are set aside annually to ensure that these training needs are met.</p> <p>The council has in place a Workforce Development Plan (Saved in folder in the following location:-</p>

	<p>W:\CORPORATE\Annual Governance Statement\AGS 2010-11\AGS\assurance framework\assurance framework evidence), which provides an overview of how the council will manage the training and development of its staff, so that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the council's activities.</p> <p>Training courses are regularly advertised in the weekly staff newsletter including the 'Learning at Work Week' held in May 2010.</p> <p>Interim arrangements have been put in place to share the Learning and Development Service across both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. A range of learning opportunities are offered to staff, with a focus on interventions to support the delivery of the Shares Services programme. For example, a series of change workshops are being held by both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, they include facilitation days, developing and maintaining resilience, CV writing skills, and interview techniques.</p> <p>In addition, training courses are held involving colleagues from other Suffolk authorities, the focus being on leadership.</p> <p>A learning and development resource page is available for employees on the intranet. The page contains quick links, contact information, information relating to local providers and other learning and development resources.</p> <p>E-learning modules continue to be developed, topics include health and safety, equality and diversity, fraud awareness, risk management, climate change and ICT Security. Learning in this way brings with it a number of benefits, for example, convenience, affordability, ease of use and informative.</p>
<p>2. ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the organisation;</p>	<p>An Officer Appointments Committee exists to deal with appointment, discipline and termination of employment of Chief Officers.</p> <p>The Chief Officers of the council are the Chief Executive, Corporate Director for Community and Corporate Director for Economy and Environment who all sit on the Corporate Management Team, with the Chief Finance Officer also in attendance.</p> <p>The council aims to make sure its recruitments practices are fair, open and effective so that the council can recruit the right people to help it achieve its goals and objectives.</p> <p>A System Review of Human Resources and Organisational Development took place in 2007/08. Its purpose being to deliver a recruitment and appointment process that ensures that approved posts are filled in a timely and efficient manner, including all induction / administrative procedures fully completed.</p> <p>Job application packs include a job and person profile advising the applicant what the job involves and sets out the knowledge, skills and experience needed to do the job, to ensure that the best candidates are appointed into each position.</p> <p>Job descriptions for all staff are in place.</p>

	<p>Staff training and personal development needs are identified through the Performance Development Review process, which all staff take part in.</p> <p>Responsibilities for statutory obligations are contained within Part 3 of the Constitution – Responsibility for Functions.</p>
<p>3. assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively;</p>	<p>Induction and training programmes are in place for both members and staff.</p> <p>The council Workforce Development Plan provides an overview of how the council will manage the training and development of its staff so that it has the skills and knowledge it needs to undertake activities, with individual plans for each service documented within the overall Service Plan for that service.</p> <p>Staff training and personal development needs are identified through the annual Performance Development Review process. Job descriptions for all staff are in place.</p> <p>The council’s Corporate Development Programme ensures that all staff have access to the training required to do their jobs and innovate and improve services provided to the community.</p> <p>Interim arrangements are in place to share the Learning and Development Service across both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath.</p> <p>A range of learning opportunities are offered to staff, with a focus on interventions to support the delivery of the Shared Services programme. For example, a series of change workshops are being held by both St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, they include facilitation days, developing and maintaining resilience, CV writing skills, and interview techniques.</p> <p>Basic skills continue to be offered to all employees. A new programme has recently started for numeracy.</p> <p>The council continues to support workforce development through the positive promotion of Adult Learner Week and in 2010 won the East of England Local Government Association Awards for Workforce Development. The council’s focus on adult learning has also resulted in the work being identified as best practice by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.</p> <p>Each year all councillors are provided with a Member Development Plan to complete to identify their own priorities for improved skills and knowledge. The plan comes with supporting documents in the form of a core skills matrix and the job descriptions for the roles each councillor holds. In addition there is the offer of a meeting with either a senior councillor or officer to work through the plan and complete it. A range of skills workshops via the Member Development Programme is offered to councillors. For 2010/11 these training sessions included presentation skills,</p>

	<p>handling challenging situations, and partnership working. Individual councillors attended conferences on important national issues including the 'Big Society', housing and rural issues.</p> <p>Councillors are asked to identify their own development needs on a form and this helps to inform individual personal development plans. Evaluation forms are issued for events attended and account taken of the feedback in planning future programmes and offering external courses. A database is held of the development activity undertaken by councillors each year.</p> <p>The Democratic Renewal Panel receives a report on the formal Member Development activity undertaken during the year, together with attendance statistics.</p> <p>In addition, Corporate Management Team is asked about the training needs they are aware of and these, together with any national or local priorities form the basis of the assessment, thereby identifying skills gaps to plan for the year ahead.</p> <p>Members of Cabinet have also had the benefit of 360 degree assessments.</p> <p>The council attained the East of England Regional Assembly Member Development Charter in 2007. The Council was re-inspected for the Member Development Charter in October 2010, but unfortunately the assessors felt unable to re-issue the Charter at that point due to the low number of Members who had completed the Training Needs Analysis. The Analysis has been completely re-written for 2011, and will be completed by each Member during a 1-1 interview with an officer, enabling both a high return, and the training needs of all Members to be taken into account when putting together the 2011/12 Member Development Programme. The assessors for the Charter are confident that St Edmundsbury will re-gain the Charter following completion of this analysis.</p>
<p>4. develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed;</p>	<p>The Council recognises the importance of training and development for both Members and officers who support the scrutiny role at St Edmundsbury. Regular targeted training, both internally and externally, has facilitated the development of a successful scrutiny function.</p> <p>A range of skills workshops via the Member Development Programme is offered to councillors, including a scrutiny training programme.</p> <p>The majority of scrutiny-specific training takes place in the two years following the four-yearly Borough Council elections, with an extensive 3-module scrutiny training programme being carried out in 2007/08 and already timetabled for 2011/12. In between the delivery of this intensive training programme, training is targeted to meet individual scrutiny Members' needs as they become apparent, for example with the introduction of a new Chairman or sub-committee.</p> <p>During 2010/11 two Members took the opportunity to attend the Centre for Public Scrutiny's Parliamentary Seminars. These annual seminars are of particular interest to scrutiny Members, who have the opportunity to see government</p>

	<p>select committees in action, and then to have a question and answer session with a committee chair. They provide a fascinating insight into how local government scrutiny was developed out of the parliamentary select committee system.</p> <p>In July 2010 nine Members attended an internal workshop on Local Government Finance as part of the wider Member Development Programme.</p> <p>Short training sessions have taken place involving members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, to raise awareness of topics and to keep abreast of any new developments. A programme of training has been developed, with sessions held on risk management, national fraud initiative and international financial reporting standards. During 2010/11 members of the Committee, and in particular its Treasury Management Sub-Committee, received extensive committee-specific training. Much of this training was carried out internally, and four Members also attended an external event, "Local Authority Treasury Management Explained".</p> <p>In February 2009, some of our councillors attended 'Scrutiny of the Budget and Finance' training which was offered by a local authority in a neighbouring county.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury's scrutiny process has a good reputation and the council is often asked for advice, or for representatives to present at conferences, the most recent example of which involved the council sharing its experience of Councillor Call for Action at the LGC Annual Scrutiny Conference in November 2010, following which several councils requested copies of St Edmundsbury's CCfA Protocol. St Edmundsbury is also a regular consultee on the content of this annual conference. Our officers also share their knowledge with frequent responses to questions posted on professional websites such as the Centre for Public Scrutiny, IDeA and Association of Democratic Services Officers.</p>
<p>5. ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the authority as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might for example aim to address any training or development needs;</p>	<p>The council challenges itself, rather than waiting for others to tell it where it needs to improve. For example, the Equality Peer Review which was undertaken in March 2010 and the Environmental Health Peer Review in February 2010. As such, the council is honest about where it needs to improve, and this is set out clearly in the council Improvement Plan. The Plan is monitored by both Management Team and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. The council is also aware of its strengths and tries to build upon them to achieve and maintain excellent performance.</p> <p>Everyone in the council is responsible for monitoring performance and striving for improvement. Councillors, through the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, play a leading role in the monitoring and review process. Some of the ways in which the council monitors and reviews performance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An annual programme of scrutiny reviews, implementation of improvement plans and consultation and comparison exercises. ❖ Vision 2025 reviewed theme by theme on a rolling programme. ❖ Annual review of our Corporate Plan and Service Plans. ❖ Reporting of key performance indicators showing progress against priorities. ❖ The combined Annual Report / Corporate Plan provides an overview of achievements and future plans. The report includes financial and performance information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Regular budget monitoring reports. ❖ A digest of complaints, showing trends and learning points. ❖ Monitoring progress of our council Improvement Plan. ❖ Twice-yearly individual Performance Development Reviews. ❖ Quarterly monitoring of the Risk Register. ❖ Subscribing to the CIPFA Benchmarking clubs identifies areas where scores are favourable when compared against other authorities, as well as those areas which do not perform as favourably, along with identifying potential areas for improvement. ❖ Project Management Board meets monthly to review progress of projects. <p>The council has an established Performance Management Group, its vision to support the council and its partners to improve performance and value for money for service users.</p> <p>In addition to internal reviews, performance is monitored by external bodies. Their work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Annual audit of our accounts, financial arrangements, data quality and performance indicators. ❖ Monitoring our progress towards implementing the council's Improvement Plan. ❖ Targeted inspection of specific services.
<p>6. ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority;</p>	<p>Communication is an essential part of the good management and the effective delivery of the council's services. Some of the ways in which the council communicates with the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the council's staff - using a range of communication methods, including weekly e-mails (E-Teamwork – also distributed to councillors) and staff briefings. • Community Spirit – magazine distributed twice a year and reaching most households in the Borough. • Website – www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk provides news, statistical and tourism information, contact details, A-Z of services, other service information, including transactional services. • Consultation – public consultations are an important way of finding out what is thought of the council's services and policies. It also helps to find out what is important to the public in order to provide services which are cost effective and efficient. Recent consultations include Vision 2031, provision of play equipment, shopper surveys and revisions / amendments to policies. • Annual Report / Corporate Plan – the combined report, provides an overview of achievements in 2010/11. The report includes financial and performance information. • Council Tax leaflet – currently produced jointly with Suffolk County Council and the Police Authority, it gives financial information and is distributed in March with council tax bills. • Members' Bulletin – for councillors and parish councils. • Advice and information leaflets – a range is produced on specific topics and available from relevant departments or in the council's reception areas. Printed leaflets are becoming less common, with more emphasis on briefing sheets which can be updated easily and the website.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media releases – regular releases (also put on the website) and briefings for print and broadcast media to enable better understanding of policies and activities. • Targeted communications – such as bimonthly Rural News (for parish councils) and Gold Standard (newsletter about shared services for staff and councillors at Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils). In addition, appropriate news is also disseminated using social media, such as Face book and Twitter. • Large print and audio versions of the council’s printed information is available. <p>The council has neither area forums nor residents panels. Rather than have a one-size fits all approach the council prefers to engage with communities at a local level in whatever way is most appropriate in order to understand their views. We have been engaging with a variety of communities to enable them to have greater control of local facilities, for example:</p> <p>We have worked for over a year with the Southgate Community Partnership which is taking on the ownership of the Southgate Community Centre. Along with responsibility for all aspects of running and maintaining the centre they now have the flexibility to run and develop the centre in the way the local community wants. In Haverhill we have consulted with residents on the Clements estate about how they wanted the old school site developed. A group of local residents is now working with officers to develop allotments, a community garden and some open space, including a play area.</p> <p>‘One Haverhill’ is a new board that will bring together a range of stakeholders including all three tiers of local government, business sector, health and police and others to explore the development of Haverhill and its facilities.</p>
<p>7. ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development;</p>	<p>All Heads of Service are encouraged to look at future succession planning needs through the Workforce Planning and Service Plan process. Succession planning and promotion from within will ensure that valuable skills and experience are retained and passed on, rather than being lost. Annual data is provided, and workshops held, by Human Resources for managers on Workforce Planning. Where several retirements are planned over a period succession planning needs are reviewed and sometimes replace posts early for a handover period. The Revenue and Benefits Section and Finance Section are a couple of sections which have introduced career grades to assist with succession planning.</p> <p>Where ambitions to progress have been revealed on Member Development Plans these will be fed back to the relevant political group. The council provides a range of skills and knowledge based sessions which over time allow councillors to equip themselves to take on new roles.</p>
<p>Step 6 – In support of Objective 1 – Apply the six CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principles</p>	
<p>Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability</p>	
<p>The local code should reflect the requirements to:</p>	
<p>1. make clear to themselves, all staff and the community, to whom they are</p>	<p>St Edmundsbury Borough Council recognises that communication with all stakeholders plays a fundamental role in the successful delivery of high quality, cost effective services.</p>

<p>accountable and for what;</p>	<p>The council continues to listen to feedback from the local community and to learn from best practice across the country. With this in mind, the council developed its Communications Strategy. This Strategy, which covers the period 2007 to 2010 details the actions planned to improve effective communications with all stakeholders across a range of methods and approaches. A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The communications strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The communications strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p> <p>The council is committed to community involvement involving residents in the planning and development of the services they use. For example, from 12 April – 10 June 2010 the council consulted on documents which helped shape the future growth of St Edmundsbury (Local Development Framework), with events held across the borough inviting stakeholders to come along and get involved.</p> <p>As well as carrying out its own consultation, it works with partners to engage and involve the community to help identify priorities and understand their needs. We have continued to engage with young people well, a recent example has been the success of the Bury Skate Park Committee which secured a large grant to improve the skate park facility in Bury St Edmunds.</p> <p>The Community Strategy provides a framework for partnership working. The council's partners include a range of organisations and individuals with an interest in West Suffolk and it was these partners who worked together to develop the strategy. Our Community Strategy is important because it provides a focus for our work together and sets clear priorities. The partnership cannot do everything, but the strategy explains what we intend to focus on; monitoring progress and reviewing actions accordingly. These priorities will be the main drivers for all our work over the next few years.</p> <p>Both the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan are based on consultation with partners and the public.</p>
<p>2. consider those stakeholders bodies to whom the organisation is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required;</p>	<p>Regarding the Community Strategy providing a framework for partnership working see (1) above. The partnership aims to add value to existing work, improving links between organisations and delivering projects. It aims to make a difference to people living and working in the area and also make West Suffolk more attractive to visitors and businesses.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan also reflects the council's contribution to the West Suffolk Community Strategy and the Suffolk Community Strategy documents which also set out a vision for the future, together with a programme of priorities that some local organisations are working towards.</p>
<p>3. produce an annual report on scrutiny function activity; (where relevant)</p>	<p>The Annual Scrutiny Report sets out achievements and explains the future work programme. The report is not intended to cover all the work of the scrutiny committees, but to present some examples of where and how scrutiny</p>

<p>4. ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders including monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively;</p>	<p>has contributed to changes and service improvements.</p> <p>The council is committed to community involvement and continues to listen to feedback from the local community and to learn from good practice across the country. Consultation informs the council's priorities, plans and projects such as Vision 2031.</p> <p>As well as carrying out its own consultation, the council works with partners to engage and involve the community to help identify priorities and understand their needs. For example, the borough continues to win 'In Bloom' awards and three of our parks have attained Green Flags. Our community supports the upkeep and protection of our green space as the popularity of 'Friends Groups' increases; this helps maintain the beauty of the area and gives local people a chance to be involved in the look and feel of an area.</p> <p>The Community Strategy provides a framework for partnership working. The West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership includes a range of organisations and individuals with an interest in West Suffolk and it was these partners who worked together to develop the strategy. Our Community Strategy is important because it provides a focus for our work together and sets clear priorities. The partnership cannot do everything, but the strategy explains what we intend to focus on; monitoring progress and reviewing actions accordingly. These priorities will be the main drivers for all our work over the next few years.</p> <p>Both the Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan are based on consultation with partners and the public.</p> <p>The Corporate Communications Strategy was produced following consultation with residents, councillors and staff on preferred communication methods. The action plan developed as a result of this consultation is now being implemented through the use of a wide range of communications methods outlined earlier in this document.</p> <p>The council's website is undergoing continuous improvement. The aim is to make information easier to understand through clear language, and more accessible through compliance with national guidelines.</p> <p>In previous years the council has contributed to the development of the Suffolk Community Strategy and the West Suffolk Community Strategy as well as producing the Vision 2025 which sets out the long term vision.</p> <p>The council has a formal complaints procedure which allows the public or other stakeholders to make a complaint regarding the service received from the council. Complaints can be made on-line or in writing and the council has set targets for responding to all complaints received, ensuring accountability to its stakeholders.</p>
<p>5. hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality;</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. Specifically, Rules of Procedure set out the way meetings will be run and the procedures for various council functions.</p> <p>All Committee meetings are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are discussed. All agenda and minutes are placed on-line, along with the council's policies and strategies. These items would also be available by</p>

	<p>directly contacting the council, should a stakeholder be unable to access them electronically.</p> <p>For several years there has been a half-hour Public Question Time at the start of each full council meeting which is open to residents of the Borough and is always used. The questions and responses are minuted briefly to indicate the topics raised, which in 2010/11 have included the Apex logo, and the location of the Wednesday Craft Market in Bury St Edmunds.</p>
<p>6. ensure arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands;</p>	<p>As above step 6 / objective 1 / 4.</p>
<p>7. establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result;</p>	<p>As above step 6 / objective 1 / 4).</p> <p>The Community Strategy was produced by the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership and was prepared by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ listening carefully to the views of local people. ❖ building on the work of existing partnerships and community networks; and ❖ looking at the profile of the Western Suffolk area. <p>The strategy provides an over-arching framework for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well being of the community.</p> <p>The council continues to listen to feedback from the local community and to learn from best practice across the country. With this in mind, the council developed its Communications Strategy. This Strategy, which covers the period 2007 to 2010 details the actions planned to improve effective communications with all stakeholders across a range of methods and approaches. A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The communications strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The communications strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p> <p>With regards to partnerships governance see objective 1 / step 2 / 5.</p>
<p>8. on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan sets a clear direction, identifies the council's priorities and provides a focus for service planning and budget setting. Its purpose is to show how every member of staff helps to deliver its priorities. To do this the council</p>

<p>the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period;</p>	<p>links all of the activities of every employee to the council's priorities, creating a link from the Community Strategy through to the annual plan in each individual's Performance Development Review.</p> <p>From 2009/10 the borough council's Annual Report and Corporate Plan was merged into one document. It made sense to combine the two, not least because in many ways they are inextricably linked. The Corporate Plan is the bedrock upon which St Edmundsbury's foundations are built and provides the future focus for our service planning and budget setting. It identifies what is most important for the council as a whole and guides our managers as they put together plans for their services in the coming year. The annual report shows how we have built upon those foundations over the past year through a series of Cabinet commitments – our promises to deliver what our residents and businesses tell us is most important to them.</p> <p>An Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is prepared by the council's External Auditors providing an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment work. The Letter is put on the council's website. A public notice is advertised in the local newspapers saying that the Audit Letter is available from the council's offices.</p> <p>Key messages included within the 2009/10 Audit Letter published January 2011 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The council uses a number of different methods of engagement depending on the issue and stakeholders involved. The council can demonstrate that the views of local people are taken into account when determining future developments. ➤ The council's financial standing is sound and it has a track record of performing within budget. The council continues to reinforce the importance of financial planning. ➤ The council continues to develop a range of collaborative arrangements for procurement with other councils and partners. Partnership arrangements have brought value for money, for example, shared waste procurement has led to lower costs and working with Suffolk County Council at West Suffolk House has enabled the council to rationalise services and share contract costs. ➤ The council performs very well on natural resources. It was the first local authority in Suffolk, and one of the first in the region to review climate change and energy dependency. Benchmarking against other organisations in the region show the council to be the best public sector performer in the region on reducing the impact of climate change. <p>The Audit Letter also made reference to the council receiving an unqualified audit opinion on the council's 2009/10 financial statements. In forming their opinion the external auditors made reference to the statements presented for audit being of a high standard and free from material error. In addition, they did not identify any significant weaknesses in internal control.</p> <p>An annual Statement of Accounts is published setting out the Authority's and the Section 151 Officer's responsibilities for the financial affairs and accounts of the council.</p>
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<p>9. ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so;</p>	<p>The council provides a vision for the community by leading by example in its decision making and other processes and actions.</p> <p>Meetings are open to the public except where personal, confidential or commercially sensitive matters are being discussed and all decisions made within these bodies are ratified by Full Council.</p> <p>The council is committed to making its finances clear, so that everyone can see exactly how we are spending money. As part of our commitment to providing financial transparency, the council produces monthly reports of all expenditure over £500 including VAT.</p> <p>Councillors and officers conduct themselves in accordance with high standards of conduct. The council’s Constitution outlines the way the council’s decision making structure operates and includes the key area of Codes and Protocols which incorporates a Code of Conduct for Members and Employees.</p> <p>A Corporate Communications Strategy was produced based on consultation with residents about their communications preferences, the Best Value Performance Indicator General User Satisfaction Survey, councillor and staff surveys of the Communications Unit’s work, an internal communications survey, and surveys of the local media and Community Spirit readers. A West Suffolk Communications Strategy will be drafted by the end of 2011 as initial work for the shared communications team between Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils. Preparation for the strategy will include appropriate internal and external consultation, and will take into account good practice identified through research. The communications strategy will focus on improving customer service and will be based on the West Suffolk Communications vision identified in the shared services business case. The communications strategy will need to be approved by both councils.</p> <p>The Bury St Edmunds Public Service Village (West Suffolk House) is an innovative partnership programme between St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council. It brings west Suffolk staff together under one roof in a purpose built public sector building. Moving to purpose-built offices allows the councils the opportunity to plan for different ways of working, based on the needs of customers, the job holder, the jobs councils do and personal circumstances.</p> <p>With regard to staff working arrangements the Flexible Working Policy exists to support its employees in achieving a work-life balance and enabling the council to achieve its overall objectives.</p>
<p>10. develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines the council's decision-making structure, one key area being the Articles of the Constitution which explain the different parts of the decision-making process and how the council will operate.</p> <p>The council communicates with its staff using a range of communication methods, including weekly e-mails and regular staff briefings. In addition, staff surveys are carried out to allow the council to keep up to date with staff opinions on what they believe needs to be done better in the council.</p>

	<p>Although the council does not have a formal staff consultation policy, a Joint Staff Consultative Panel has been formed. In addition, a Facilities Agreement is in place between the council and recognised trade unions.</p>
<p>Objective 2 – Identify principal risks to achievement of objectives: Step 1: In support of objective 2 – The authority has robust systems and processes in place for the identification and management of strategic and operational risk</p>	
<p>Examples of Assurance</p>	<p>Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required</p>
<p>1. There is a written strategy and policy in place for managing risk which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has been formally approved at political and risk management board (or equivalent) level • Is reviewed on a regular basis • Has been communicated to all relevant staff • Includes partnership risks 	<p>The council formally adopted a Risk Management Strategy in 2003, which was revised in October 2009. The latest update incorporated changes in working practices and organisational changes that had occurred. In addition, a clearer management trail in terms of who is responsible for each mitigating action was introduced, and what the timelines are for each action. Partnerships and risk is specifically referred to within the revised Risk Management Strategy</p> <p>The strategy and guidance are available to all staff and members via the council's intranet.</p>
<p>2. The authority has implemented clear structures and processes for risk management which are successfully implemented and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management board and elected members see risk management as a priority and support it by personal interest and input • Decision making considers risk • A senior manager has been appointed to "champion" risk management • Roles and responsibilities for risk management have been defined • Risk management systems are subject to independent assessment • Risk management is considered in the annual business planning process • Risk management extends to 	<p>The responsibility for managing risk is not restricted to any one person or group of specialists. It is the duty of every member of staff and elected member. However, it is essential to delegate clear responsibility for different areas of risk management. Those with specific responsibilities include the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, Strategic Risk Management Group, Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Risk Manager, Corporate Management and Management Teams, Heads of Service, and Service Managers.</p> <p>In addition the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development has been given specific responsibility for risk management.</p> <p>All Cabinet reports include a section on the identification and management of risks to ensure that decisions are taken in full awareness of the implications.</p> <p>The risk register review process is that members of the Strategic Risk Management Group, made up of senior officers and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for risk consider the register and amend, add or delete as appropriate. A new draft register is then considered by Management Team, where officers from all services have the opportunity to make amendments. The approved draft register is presented to members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis for consideration and amendment, after which it becomes the final version and is used as a basis for planning council activities.</p> <p>Risk Management systems are subject to on-going independent assessment by Internal Audit and the council's External Auditors (Audit Commission).</p>

<p>partnership risks</p>	<p>Risk Management has also been embedded within the council's corporate and service planning framework. Partnerships and risk is specifically referred to within the revised Risk Management Strategy. The council's partnership strategy refers to 'robust risk assessment' as one of the key principles for the success of any partnership. Any identified partnership must draw up a joint risk register, and for the council the lead officer for the partnership is responsible for ensuring that the register is kept up to date, and that any corporate issues resulting from the risk register are included in the corporate risk register.</p>
<p>3. The authority has developed a corporate approach to the identification and evaluation of risk which is understood by all staff</p>	<p>The Strategic Risk Management Group has implemented a systematic corporate approach to the identification, evaluation and management of the organisation's risks. Risk management processes have now been embedded within the council (see section 10 below).</p> <p>A quarterly monitoring report providing an update on the Corporate Risk Register is presented to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, the report and associated appendices are available on the council's website.</p>
<p>4. The authority has well defined procedures for recording and reporting risk</p>	<p>Overall policies and procedures for risk management are included within the Risk Management Strategy. Detailed procedures for recording and reporting risks have been developed by the Strategic Risk Management Group. Key components of the council's risk management framework are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Corporate Risk Register ❖ Service risk registers ❖ Project risk registers <p>For several years corporate risks and, where appropriate, highly rated service, and project risks, have been subject to quarterly reporting and review (through the Strategic Risk Management Working Group, Management Team and Overview and Scrutiny Committee / Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee).</p> <p>Management Team specifically consider the completeness of the corporate risk register when this is an agenda item prior to reporting to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Members of the Cabinet meet with the Corporate Management Team and other lead officers twice monthly to review current issues.</p> <p>Emerging issues are regularly reviewed by Management Team and reported at the Cabinet/Corporate Management Team meeting on a bi-monthly basis.</p>
<p>5. The authority has well-established and clear arrangements for financing risk</p>	<p>The council's appointed insurers advise on, and ensure compliance with, statutory requirements for insurance.</p> <p>Self insurance provisions are subject to annual review as part of the annual budget setting process, to ensure adequacy of contributions and claims costs. External consultants were used to help establish the self insurance funding arrangements. There is a need for these to be operated over a period of approximately 5 years for the council to fully</p>

	<p>assess claims record and the adequacy of the fund. From 1st April 2010 Zurich Municipal has been the council's insurer. Insurance claims procedures and timescales accord with Woolf principles.</p> <p>Claims expenditure is monitored as part of the annual budget setting process.</p>
<p>6. The authority has developed a programme of risk management training for relevant staff</p>	<p>The responsibility for managing risk is not restricted to any one person or group of specialists. It is the duty of every member of staff and elected member.</p> <p>Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee members received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer in April 2009 which refreshed members understanding of risk management. The presentation covered three main areas:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of a possible risk and its inherent risk score; • what can be done to reduce the risk; and • what was the residual risk score and whether this was acceptable. <p>The presentation covered a worked example of the three year government grant settlement.</p> <p>Corporate risk management continues to form part of the council's induction for new staff, to ensure that all staff joining the council have a broad understanding of how risk is managed within the authority.</p> <p>New and more concise risk management guidance for managers has been produced and an online risk management training module designed to improve the general level of understanding of risk management across the organisation.</p> <p>In addition, the training for two groups of service managers was provided in 2008/09 as part of an officer's research project and dissertation on the Application of Risk Management in a Local Authority Setting, in support of their Masters Degree in Public Service Management. The training itself focused on 'horizon scanning' and the risk identification process, and was delivered to two service teams.</p>
<p>7. The corporate risk management board (or equivalent) adds value to the risk management process by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Advising and supporting corporate management team on risk strategies · Identifying areas of overlapping risk · Driving new risk management initiatives · Communicating risk management and sharing good practice · Providing and reviewing risk 	<p>A Strategic Risk Management Group was established in September 2005. This group is made up of the following individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development • Chief Finance Officer (also acts as the Corporate Risk Manager) • A representative Head of Service from each directorate • A representative from the Programme Board • A representative from the Performance Management Group • Internal Audit Manager • Business Continuity / Emergency Planning Officer <p>The role of this group is to manage the process of updating the risk register on a quarterly basis, and through doing so contribute the following added value:</p>

<p>management training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Regularly reviewing the risk register(s) · Coordinating the results for risk reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share experience on risk, risk management and strategy implementation • Identify areas of overlapping risk • Drive new initiatives • Communicate risk management and share good practice • Feed into strategy review • Drive process of risk profiling/assessment • Participate in the delivery of risk management training <p>The group meet quarterly to review, update and monitor progress of the risk register.</p>
<p>8. A corporate risk officer has been appointed with the necessary skills to analyse issues and offer options and advice and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support decision making and policy formulation · Provides support in the risk identification and analysis process · Provides support in prioritising risk mitigation action · Provides advice and support in determining risk treatments · Inspires confidence in managers 	<p>The Chief Finance Officer (as the Corporate Risk Manager) supports the council and its directorates in development, implementation and review of risk management arrangements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing the Risk Management Strategy • promoting, supporting and overseeing its implementation • identifying any dedicated inputs or resources required to support the work • monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the strategy • identifying and communicating risk management issues to services • assisting services in undertaking risk management activity via training and/or direct support <p>Risk management is being progressed within existing resources under the direction and leadership of the Strategic Risk Management Group. Key areas of responsibility for delivering risk management are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Corporate Management Team – compilation / maintenance of corporate risk register (assistance from Strategic Risk Management Group) ❖ Corporate Directors / Heads of Service – compilation / maintenance of service risk registers (assistance from Strategic Risk Management Group) ❖ Heads of Service / Section Heads – compilation / maintenance of service risk registers (guidance and assistance from Chief Finance Officer) ❖ Corporate Project Management Board (Corporate Management Team / Heads of Service) and Project Management Boards (for larger projects) – compilation / maintenance of project risk registers.
<p>9. Managers are accountable for managing their risks</p>	<p>For all types of risk it is necessary to have a clear line of responsibility, both for the overall risk itself, and for any staff who are specifically responsible for each of the mitigating actions. There will often be more than one person responsible for the mitigating actions of any particular risk.</p> <p>The responsibility for managing risk is not restricted to any one person or group of specialists. It is the duty of every member of staff and elected member. Risks have always been dealt with. Risk management is not a new responsibility but simply the formalisation of what is part of normal good working practices. Similarly, every service and line manager</p>

	<p>is a risk manager for his or her field of responsibility.</p> <p>However, it is essential to delegate clear responsibility for different areas of risk management. Those with specific responsibilities include the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, Strategic Risk Management Group, Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Risk Manager, Corporate Management and Management Teams, Heads of Service, and Service Managers.</p> <p>Management responsibilities for risk management are included within the various risk registers in that all risks / actions have clearly identified responsible officers (service / corporate). The Chief Finance Officer (as the council's Corporate Risk Manager) is responsible for most of the day to day management support for risk management.</p> <p>It is the role of Internal Audit to review, appraise and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system of internal control, risk management and governance and how these arrangements are operating. This is achieved by undertaking audits across the council's functions in accordance with the audit plan. Any non compliance will be raised in a written audit report for management to action. It is management's responsibility for ensuring that agreed actions are implemented. Such actions will be followed up by Internal Audit to ensure they have been implemented, particularly those where risks are high.</p>
<p>10. Risk management is embedded throughout the organisation</p>	<p>The Audit Commission (as the council's external auditors) have previously stated that they consider the council's arrangements for risk management to be embedded (Audit and Inspection Letter 2008). The council formally adopted a Risk Management Strategy in 2003, which was revised in October 2009.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Organisational Development is the lead member for risk management and attends the Strategic Risk Management Group.</p> <p>Within its terms of reference the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee will monitor and scrutinise the performance of the council's services by having regard to a variety of information, including performance indicators, financial information, reports from external inspections, audit reports, and monitoring of action plans. With specific reference to risk management the Committee provides assurance of the effectiveness of the corporate risk assessment process and monitors the effective development and operation of risk management policies in the council, specifically including monitoring of the Risk Management Strategy and the corporate risk register.</p> <p>Under the code of corporate governance the council is obliged to ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the council, with members and managers at all levels recognising that managing potential and actual risks is part of their role.</p> <p>As part of this function the council undertakes a quarterly review of its strategic risks. These risks are those which could significantly affect the council's ability to perform and deliver services both currently and in the future. Once risks have been identified and rated suitable actions are identified which will reduce or eliminate that risk. The risk register review process is that members of the Strategic Risk Management Group, made up of senior officers</p>

	<p>and the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for risk consider the register and amend, add or delete as appropriate. A new draft register is then considered by Management Team, where officers from all services have the opportunity to make amendments. The approved draft register is presented to members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis for consideration and amendment, after which it becomes the final version and is used as a basis for planning council activities.</p> <p>The emerging issues which present reputational risks to the authority are regularly reviewed by Management Team and reported at the Cabinet / Corporate Management Team meeting on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>Corporate and service risks are shown as key drivers within the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Service plans are built up on a risk basis with service risk registers now embedded within the service planning process, with service plans cross referenced to relevant risks within the corporate and service risk registers.</p> <p>Risk awareness / management is at the heart of the project management process. All major projects are risk reviewed on a regular basis at meetings of the project board. A consideration of the project risks is undertaken using an agreed scoring mechanism (included within the project initiation form) - the result of this then determines whether a full risk register is required for that project.</p> <p>Partnerships and risk is specifically referred to within the revised Risk Management Strategy. The council's partnership strategy refers to 'robust risk assessment' as one of the key principles for the success of any partnership. Any identified partnership must draw up a joint risk register, and for the council the lead officer for the partnership is responsible for ensuring that the register is kept up to date, and that any corporate issues resulting from the risk register are included in the corporate risk register.</p> <p>Consideration of risks is in-built into the standard Cabinet reports template.</p> <p>The 'Leadership and Managing Others' competency that forms part of the Performance Development Review process includes responsibility for risk management.</p> <p>Corporate risk management will continue to form part of the council's induction for new staff, to ensure that all staff joining the council have a broad understanding of how risk is managed within the authority.</p> <p>New and more concise risk management guidance for managers has been produced and an online risk management training module designed to improve the general level of understanding of risk management across the organisation.</p> <p>Risk management training was presented to the members of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee at the April 2009 meeting. In addition, presentations by the Corporate Risk Manager at the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee meetings of the corporate risk register include an element of training, for example, advice on the areas of risk which members should focus their attention and questions on – new risks, 'red' risks etc and any explanations of</p>
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	<p>any new templates and headings.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Section contributes to, and draws from, the risk management framework when preparing and completing its annual plan of work. The audit plan, takes account of corporate risks, as well as service and system risks, and uses these to drive the audit process to focus on improvement outcomes for the organisation.</p>
<p>11. Risks in partnership working are fully considered</p>	<p>Partnerships and risk is specifically referred to within the Risk Management Strategy. The council's partnership strategy refers to 'robust risk assessment' as one of the key principles for the success of any partnership. Any identified partnership must draw up a joint risk register, and for the council the Lead Officer for the partnership is responsible for ensuring that the register is kept up to date, and that any corporate issues resulting from the risk register are included in the corporate risk register.</p> <p>Partnerships are included as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register. Potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives are identified. Once risks have been identified and rated suitable actions are identified which will reduce or eliminate that risk.</p> <p>Risk assessments are an integral element of cabinet reports.</p> <p>Risk management is embedded within the council's project management processes and procedures (as set out in the Project Management Guidance and Toolkit). Project risk registers are compiled at project initiation stage and are subject to regular update and review by the relevant project teams / boards. Councillor involvement in project boards for major projects has increased knowledge and understanding of risk management amongst members, and an expectation that risk assessments should be undertaken for all significant activities (large projects and partnerships) within the council.</p> <p>A corporate officer project board has been established to approve and monitor major projects, including consideration of the status of identified risks (via the project status report).</p> <p>Partnership programmes and projects are all now subject to the new corporate risk assessment process through the grant panel assessment process, the LAA and the LSP partnership assessment processes.</p>
<p>12. Where employed, risk management information systems meet users' needs</p>	<p>The use of dedicated risk management software has not been progressed in view of the current economic climate and the Shared Services Agenda. Risk registers are recorded using Microsoft Excel – this is considered adequate for the council's needs.</p> <p>Both the Risk Management Strategy and risk management guidance are clearly located on the front page of the staff intranet site, allowing them to be easily accessible to staff.</p> <p>A quarterly monitoring report providing an update on the Corporate Risk Register is presented to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, the report and associated appendices are available on the council's website.</p>

	All risk registers are a constituent part of service plans.
Objective 3 – Identify and evaluate key controls to manage principal risks:	
Step 1: In support of objective 3 – The authority has robust system of internal control which includes systems and procedures to mitigate principal risks	
Examples of Assurance	Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required
<p>1. There are written financial regulations in place which have been formally approved, regularly reviewed and widely communicated to all relevant staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Authority has adopted CIPFA code on Treasury Management · Compliance with the Prudential Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Financial Procedure Rules and a Scheme of Financial Delegation are incorporated within the council’s Constitution which was last amended in October 2010. ❖ The Constitution is published on the council’s intranet ❖ Compliance with Financial Procedure Rules is subject to on-going review by Internal Audit and the external auditors. ❖ The council adopted the CIPFA code on Treasury Management in March 2002. Regular reports on treasury management policy and performance are provided to Cabinet and Council, as appropriate. ❖ Compliance with the Prudential Code is subject to annual review by the external auditors – no concerns have been raised. <p>The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities was last updated in 2001 (adopted by the council in March 2002) and revised in 2009 in the light of the international banking crisis, including the collapse of the Icelandic banks in 2008. Reference to the revised Code of Practice and associated treasury management clauses were included in the council’s Constitution following adoption by Full Council in February 2010. In addition, the new Code also required the council to undertake enhanced scrutiny of the treasury function, and that a Treasury Management Sub-Committee be established. In response to this, the council has established a Treasury Management Sub-Committee, its primary role being to fulfil the enhanced monitoring and scrutiny requirements of the revised CIPFA Code. The sub committee receives and scrutinises quarterly the strategy, performance and monitoring reports and makes recommendations to Cabinet and Council, as appropriate. During 2010/11 members of the Committee received extensive committee-specific training. Much of this training was carried out internally, and four Members also attended an external event, “Local Authority Treasury Management explained”.</p> <p>Central government has decided that the preparation and presentation of Local Government Annual Accounts can improve through following international best practice. From 2009/10 the council has had to comply with the ‘International Financial Reporting Standards’ (IFRS).</p>
<p>2. There are written contract standing orders in place which have been formally approved, regularly reviewed and widely communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>Every contract made by the council should comply with the Contract Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution. The Constitution is published on the council’s intranet and website.</p> <p>All procurement decisions should be checked for compliance with the council’s own Contracts Procedure Rules and with the European Union Procurement Regulations. Exemptions to the Rules are permitted in a limited number of specific circumstances but only on the presentation of a written report to the appropriate committee, showing clear justification for the exemption. Ideally this should show a cashable or efficiency benefit to justify the exemption.</p>

<p>3. There is a whistle blowing policy in place which has been formally approved, regularly reviewed and widely communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>Revised Whistleblowing Guide adopted by Full Council on 23 February 2006. Guide is published on the council's intranet and web site.</p> <p>A number of fraud messages have been included within the council's weekly staff newsletter to remind staff of their responsibilities. Also, annual reminders continue to be sent to members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p>
<p>4. There is a counter fraud and corruption policy in place which has been formally approved, regularly reviewed and widely communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>The council's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy was revised in July 2009. The strategy has been revised to meet current good practice as set out in the CIPFA Better Governance Forum guidance <i>'Managing the Risk of Fraud: actions to counter fraud and corruption'</i>. The Strategy is published on both the council's internet and intranet.</p> <p>An assessment against current good practice, as set out in the CIPFA Better Governance Forum document <i>'Managing the Risk of Fraud'</i> has been carried out, which helps organisations to understand the world of fraud and corruption. In addition, Internal Audit have completed the checklist included within the Audit Commission's document <i>'Protecting the Public Purse – Local Government Fighting Fraud'</i> which considers the key fraud risks and pressures facing councils. Overall, the self assessments showed that the council was already substantially complying with requirements. There were some minor areas for development nevertheless, where we could further strengthen our arrangements. These improvements were introduced by Internal Audit during 2010/11.</p> <p>Anti-Money Laundering guidance exists which helps staff and members understand the legal and regulatory requirements relating to money laundering. In addition, an Anti-Money Laundering Policy has recently been drafted and approved by Full Council. Where appropriate, key staff will be provided with training identifying potential activities and reporting concerns to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer.</p> <p>A number of fraud messages have been included within the council's weekly staff newsletter to remind staff of their responsibilities. In addition, annual reminders continue to be sent to members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p> <p>Part of the work of the Internal Audit section is the investigation of irregularities and fraud. A tri-ennial review of the work of the Internal Audit section is presented to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p>5. There are codes of conduct in place which have been formally approved and widely communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>The Members' Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Employees and the Member/Officer Protocol are all incorporated within the council's Constitution. The documents are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ define the standards of personal behaviour individual councillors, officers, and agents of the council must follow; and ❖ ensure that elected councillors and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. <p>Codes and Protocols are issued to all staff on appointment and reinforced as part of the induction process. Codes are</p>

	<p>published on the council's intranet.</p> <p>Both documents were subject to review during 2007.</p> <p>A number of fraud messages have been included within the council's weekly staff newsletter to remind staff of their responsibilities. In addition, annual reminders continue to be sent to members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p>
<p>6. A register of interests is maintained, regularly updated and reviewed</p>	<p>The Members' Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Employees and the Member/Officer Protocol are all incorporated within the council's Constitution. The documents are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ define the standards of personal behaviour individual councillors, officers, and agents of the council must follow; and ❖ ensure that elected councillors and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. <p>A Standards Committee is in place, its roles and functions include promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors, assisting councillors to observe the Members Code of Conduct and monitoring the operation of the Members Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Registers of interests (including gifts and hospitality) are maintained by Democratic Services for members, with interests recorded on the council's website. All the interests which are declarable under the Members Code of Conduct have to appear in the Register of Interests, and any changes need to be reported within 28 days.</p> <p>Staff are reminded that they need to register any financial or non financial interests, or relationships with contractors, which could reasonably be considered to conflict with the council's interests so that the public, council staff, and members are aware of this potential conflict. In addition, officers at Grade 6 or above are not able to engage in any business or employment outside the council without the express permission in writing of their Corporate Director, to prevent any possible conflict of interest. Further details are available to staff via the Code of Conduct for Employees, which includes supplementary guidance and a declaration of interest form.</p>
<p>7. Where a scheme of delegation has been drawn up, it has been formally approved and communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>The Constitution outlines the way the council's decision-making structure operates. Specifically, responsibility for functions which indicate which councillors and officers are responsible for certain decisions.</p> <p>The Constitution was last revised in October 2010, although it is continually updated on the master version. A copy of the Constitution is easily accessible on the intranet.</p>
<p>8. A corporate procurement policy has been drawn up, formally approved and communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>A 3 year Procurement Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet in March 2008. A copy of the procurement strategy is available on the internet.</p> <p>A Procurement Manager is employed by the council, part of his role is to develop the council's procurement strategy, good practice and procedures to secure best value for money. Some examples of recent developments to procurement</p>

	<p>arrangements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement newsletter – a quarterly newsletter has been introduced for everyone connected to any procurement activities; • Procurement e-learning modules have been rolled out to enhance the knowledge of buyers in different departments. • The council procured an eTendering and eContract Management system together with other local authorities in Suffolk. This system will be rolled out in the council in May -July, 2011, while users will be given necessary training; the system is expected to deliver value for money through efficient procurement as well as better contract management. • creation of a “Current Tenders” page on the council’s website, thus opening up the procurement opportunities to a wider supplier audience and improving the transparency of the process. • The council has now also decided to use the ‘Contracts Finder’ website to place contract opportunity notices for any tender opportunities above £10,000. • The procurement pages of the council’s website have been enriched and updated to be more informative, user friendly and purposeful. They now include a section called ‘Public Procurement Guide’ developed by working with procurement colleagues in other public sector organisations in Suffolk, expected to help local suppliers. • The council’s intranet procurement pages have been enriched and updated with best practice guidance, latest tools, templates documents, e-Learning modules, and also includes a section called ‘Guidance for Elected Members’.
<p>9. Business/service continuity plans have been drawn up for all critical service areas and the plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Are subject to regular testing · Are subject to regular review 	<p>Corporate Business Continuity:</p> <p>Robust business continuity is essential in ensuring that critical services can still be delivered. The council has had a number of workshops and training exercises over the last few years, which have been organised in coordination with the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU). For example, training sessions for members of the Tactical Management Teams has been undertaken in the last 3 months and a number of staff briefing sessions have been delivered during the same period.</p> <p>The Business Continuity Plan (Loss of West Suffolk House) was tested in September 2010 and the council participated in a county wide Loss Of Fuel business continuity exercise in November 2010.</p> <p>Business Continuity action cards are updated on a rolling basis throughout the year. In 2010/11, all have been updated, as has the Business Continuity Strategy. All documents are located on the council’s shared drive and centrally on the JEPU extranet, for ease of access. They are also located in the ‘battle box’.</p> <p>These preparations have placed the organisation well to respond to any ‘live’ situation occurring.</p> <p>ICT Business Continuity:</p>

	<p>Recovery of back ups is periodically tested using restoration procedures.</p> <p>In August 2009 a full test of the ICT disaster recovery arrangements was carried out to make sure the council's servers were recoverable, whilst individual file restores take place periodically. A further (successful) test took place with the supplier in May 2010.</p> <p>Restoration procedures were covered within a recent audit of ICT back up arrangements.</p> <p>The Disaster Recovery Plan has recently been revised to reflect staff changes and the move to West Suffolk House. The plan was re-issued 5th January 2010.</p>
<p>10. The corporate/departmental risk register(s) includes expected key controls to manage principal risks</p>	<p>The council maintains a corporate risk register. Its function is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify open and closed risks and those requiring ongoing monitoring; • provide for ongoing framework and action plans; • increase corporate risk and control awareness; • promote effective and efficient controls; • identify responsibilities; • provide for a system of continuous improvement; • provide a platform for ongoing control improvements, e.g. control self-certification process; • improve risk management focus on key and developing risk areas; and • focus management effort. <p>The Strategic Risk Management Group meets quarterly to review, update and monitor progress of the risk register. Management Team receives a copy of the risk register when it is going to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee as part of the circulation of papers for future Scrutiny meetings.</p> <p>Operational risks form an integral part of service plans, with 2010/11 service plans built up on a risk basis. Although there is no formal process as such for reviewing service plans, they are an ongoing cycle, with preparation for the following year's service plans commencing in September / October and only finalised in February / March.</p>
<p>11. Key risk indicators have been drawn up to track the movement of key risks and are regularly monitored and reviewed</p>	<p>All key risks within the corporate risk register are subject to quarterly monitoring and review by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee using an established scoring mechanism, advising cabinet whether the actions planned to mitigate the identified risks are adequate, and, if there are any other risks which should be added to the register.</p>
<p>12. The authority's internal control framework is subject to regular independent assessment</p>	<p>The requirement to have a sound system of internal control applies to all of the council's activities. The internal control environment within the council consists of a number of different elements, which taken together contribute to the overall corporate governance framework.</p>

	<p>The Internal Audit Section works to an Audit Plan covering a period of one year. The Audit Plan provides for the annual review of all the main financial systems together with the audit of a number of operational areas, using a risk based methodology. The production of the Audit Plan takes account of the adequacy and the outcomes of the organisation’s risk management, performance management and other assurance processes (such as the Annual Governance Statement). A degree of flexibility is built into the Audit Plan to reflect the changing risks and protocols of the council, and to allow for unexpected audit assignments.</p> <p>The internal control framework is subject to on-going review not only by Internal Audit but also the external auditors and other external inspection agencies, identifying improvements in relation to the economic, effective and efficient use of resources and in the way in which functions are exercised.</p>
<p>13. A corporate health and safety policy has been drawn up, formally approved, is subject to regular review and has been communicated to all relevant staff</p>	<p>A Health and Safety Policy is in place, last revised October 2009, with an amendment in June 2010. It aims to give direction and guidance to all employees, outside contractors and visitors on health and safety matters and to delegate responsibility in ensuring that the policy is implemented in a structured and effective manner. The Health and Safety Policy is regularly reviewed by the Health and Safety Manager. The policy is available on the intranet and on the council’s website. In addition, the policy is brought to the attention of employees at induction.</p> <p>Health and safety legislation places very specific duties on employers who share workplaces. To comply with this legislation both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council have implemented a number of joint health and safety policies at West Suffolk House.</p> <p>All other health and safety policies remain the responsibility of each employer.</p> <p>Health and safety information is available to the public through the internet.</p> <p>Incidents involving employees and incidents involving members of the public are recorded and reported to both the Area Safety Committee Meeting and Central Safety Panel. There is a West Suffolk House Joint Committee between St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council, any matters that arise relating to health and safety at West Suffolk House would also be raised at this committee.</p> <p>During 2010/11 6 instances were reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, of which none have been investigated by the HSE.</p> <p>Mandatory health and safety training is via the intranet. Modules for completion include manual handling; health, safety and environment access; fire safety; stress management and driver safety awareness.</p> <p>Health and Safety training during 2010/11 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ IOSH (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health) Managing (1 session); ❖ C & S Train the Trainer (2 sessions);

	❖ EVAC (evacuation chairs) (3 sessions).
<p>14. A corporate complaints policy/procedure has been drawn up, formally approved, communicated to all relevant staff, the public and other stakeholders is regularly reviewed</p>	<p>Managing complaints from customers is a crucial part of the council's overall approach to customer service. The council has a two step process for complaints which is outlined below:</p> <p>STEP 1 - this should be the starting point for any complaint if the complainant has not contacted us regarding this complaint previously. The complaint should be investigated by the responsible service and a response given to the complainant. If the complainant has been in contact as part of normal casework previously, it is good practice that a different officer investigates the complaint.</p> <p>STEP 2 - if the complainant is not satisfied with a step 1 response the complaint will be escalated to step 2 of the process. The complaint will now be investigated by Legal and Democratic Services who will give an explanation of how the situation has been handled and the investigations that have taken place.</p> <p>If after having received a step 2 response the complainant is not happy with the response then they can choose to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.</p> <p>A Biannual Corporate Complaints Digest is provided to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. The aim of the digest is to provide an overview of the quantity and type of corporate complaints that the council receives, as well as monitoring effectiveness at responding and learning from any mistakes that have been made.</p> <p>Corporate "Complaints, Comments and Suggestions" procedure and guidance notes and associated forms are available on the intranet and the council's web site.</p>
<p>Objective 4 – Obtain assurance on the effectiveness of key controls: Step 1: In support of objective 4 – Appropriate assurance statements are received from designated internal and external assurance providers: The authority has identified appropriate sources of assurance · Appropriate external assurances are identified and obtained</p>	
<p>Example of Assurance</p>	<p>Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required</p>
<p>1. The authority has determined appropriate internal and external sources of assurance</p>	<p>Key sources of assurance are documented within the Annual Governance Statement and are reviewed / approved by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>External sources of assurance include those taken into account by the Internal Audit Manager in arriving at his annual opinion on internal control contained within the annual Internal Audit report presented to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee in April 2011.</p>
<p>2. Appropriate key controls on which assurance is to be given have been identified and agreed</p>	<p>Key controls evaluation based upon the CIPFA FAN assurance framework, completed by or in consultation with, appropriate senior managers.</p>

<p>3. Departmental assurances are provided</p>	<p>As part of the work undertaken in support of the Annual Governance Statement –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ evidence gathered to support the CIPFA assurance framework has been reviewed by an Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group (comprising the council’s Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Internal Audit Manager, Policy, Performance and Customer Service Manager and Senior Auditor). ❖ review / approval of the Annual Governance Statement and supporting evidence framework by Management Team ❖ review / approval of the Annual Governance Statement by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee separately from the approval of the annual accounts.
<p>4. External assurance reports are collated centrally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports are reviewed by relevant senior management team and reported to appropriate committee • Action plans are prepared and approved as appropriate • Follow up reports on recommendations are requested and reviewed by relevant senior management team and progress is regularly reported to relevant committee 	<p>External assurance reports were all available for review by the Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group.</p> <p>The council’s Improvement Plan brings together a range of actions to help the council achieve further improvements in performance.</p> <p>The following drivers for improvement are considered when drafting the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the Cabinet’s commitments; ❖ the review of the existing Improvement Plan; ❖ recommendations in the Audit Commission’s Annual Audit and Inspection letter; ❖ new legislation; and ❖ council priorities <p>Progress on the Improvement Plan is reviewed every 6 months by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p>
<p>5. Internal Audit Arrangements</p>	<p>Internal Audit report to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee as the designated Audit Committee. The annual report of the Internal Audit Manager includes an opinion on the internal control framework – the opinion for 2010/11 being as follows: “Based on the work undertaken during the year, as well as assurances made available to the council by other assurance providers, Internal Audit can provide reasonable assurance that the systems of internal control within these areas of the council, as well as the risk management systems, were operating adequately and effectively. Our work has, however, identified a number of areas where existing arrangements should be improved”.</p>
<p>6. Corporate Governance Arrangements</p>	<p>The Code of Corporate Governance was revised last in 2010 to bring it up to date with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework document <i>‘Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government; a Framework’</i> issued in March 2010. The Code is available on both the council’s website and intranet.</p> <p>The Code is subject to annual review by Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and includes an assessment of the council’s position against CIPFA / SOLACE guidance and standards together with proposed actions and developments for the maintenance / improvement of corporate governance arrangements.</p>
<p>7. Performance monitoring arrangements</p>	<p>The way Local Authorities measure performance has changed significantly over the past year. The National Indicator Set has been abolished and replaced with a single data list of information for local authorities to supply to central</p>

	<p>government.</p> <p>The council monitors the performance of its services by quarterly reporting to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, using a set of key performance indicators which are reviewed and updated annually.</p> <p>St Edmundsbury has recently introduced Covalent Performance Management Software. This system is being used in conjunction with Forest Heath District Council as part the Shared Services Agenda. Covalent is a web based performance management tool that allows for upload of all Performance Indicators. The system currently has the Key Performance Indicators (as reported to Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee) and various local indicators for use by individual services. It is anticipated that more services will use the tool for storing/measuring performance overtime. The system also has capacity for project planning, risk management and customer feedback which will be introduced once use of the performance indicator aspect of the system has been embedded.</p> <p>The Performance Management Group meets every two months to monitor and review performance across all services using national frameworks/toolkits and individual service information to improve performance for the authority.</p> <p>Service plans include setting and monitoring of performance standards and targets.</p>		
<p>Objective 5 – Evaluate assurances and identify gaps in control/ assurances: Step 1: In support of objective 5 – The authority has made adequate arrangements to identify, receive and evaluate reports from the defined internal and external assurance providers to identify areas of weakness in controls</p>			
<p>Examples of Assurance</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="517 874 1458 906">Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required</th> <th data-bbox="1458 874 1861 906">Supporting Evidence</th> </tr> </thead> </table>	Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required	Supporting Evidence
Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required	Supporting Evidence		
<p>1. Responsibilities for the evaluation of assurances are clearly defined throughout the organisation</p>	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="517 906 1458 1150"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Responsibilities formally documented (Overview and Scrutiny Committee report July 2006) ❖ Internal Audit are responsible for co-ordination of assurance ❖ Senior management are responsible for compilation of assurances / evidence in their appropriate areas ❖ Assurance framework, Annual Governance Statement and supporting evidence are reviewed by the Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group and Management Team ❖ Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee review Annual Governance Statement as part of their audit and accounts responsibilities. </td> <td data-bbox="1458 906 1861 1150"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Responsibilities formally documented (Overview and Scrutiny Committee report July 2006) ❖ Internal Audit are responsible for co-ordination of assurance ❖ Senior management are responsible for compilation of assurances / evidence in their appropriate areas ❖ Assurance framework, Annual Governance Statement and supporting evidence are reviewed by the Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group and Management Team ❖ Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee review Annual Governance Statement as part of their audit and accounts responsibilities. 	
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<p>2. Mechanism established for collecting <i>governance assurances</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Overall responsibility allocated to <i>governance</i> senior officer group · Required assurances are agreed and recorded · Central record of all assurances (either evidence file, or showing 	<p>Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group established for review of Annual Governance Statement, assurance framework and supporting evidence.</p> <p>A central record of assurances / evidence is maintained by Internal Audit.</p>		

<p>clear link to where evidence is held)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Clear guidance as to evaluation procedure including assurance over risks, independence and objectivity of assurances · Defined evaluation mechanism · Timetable for completion by statutory deadline · Gap assessment – performed and challenged 	
<p>Objective 6 – Action plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system of corporate governance:</p>	
<p>Step 1: In support of objective 6 – There is a robust mechanism to ensure that an appropriate action plan is agreed to address identified control weaknesses and is implemented and monitored</p>	
<p>Examples of Assurance</p>	<p>Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required</p>
<p>1. An action plan is drawn up and approved</p>	<p>Issues for improvement in corporate governance and internal control are captured within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Action plans arising from Internal Audit reviews ❖ Action plans arising from external audit and inspection reviews
<p>2. All actions are 'SMART':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Specific · Measurable · Achievable · Realistic · Time-bound 	<p>Actions contained within relevant action plans are all SMART i.e. Internal Audit reviews and Annual Governance Statement.</p>
<p>3. Actions communicated and responsibilities assigned</p>	<p>All actions have responsibilities assigned and are communicated as appropriate i.e. Internal Audit reviews, Annual Governance Statement and Effectiveness of Internal Audit.</p>
<p>4. Implementation timescales agreed</p>	<p>All action plans have agreed implementation timescales as appropriate i.e. Internal Audit reviews, Annual Governance Statement and Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit.</p>
<p>5. Ongoing review of progress and of continuing appropriateness of action</p>	<p>Audit action plans subject to annual follow up procedures.</p> <p>Code of Corporate Governance actions subject to annual review by Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Remaining Annual Governance Statement assurance framework actions subject to annual review.</p>

Objective 7 – Annual Governance Statement:	
Step 1: In support of objective 7 – An Annual Governance Statement has been drafted in accordance with the statutory requirements and timetable set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, as revised by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006, and is in accordance with CIPFA guidance.	
Examples of Assurance	Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required
1. Responsibility for the compilation of the Annual Governance Statement has been assigned to a team drawn from appropriate disciplines and having sufficient seniority.	See 5.1 above. Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group consists of Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit Manager, Senior Auditor and Policy, Performance and Customer Service Manager.
2. There is an Annual Governance Statement production timetable that meets the statutory deadline	Annual Governance Statement recommended for approval by Performance and Audit Scrutiny prior to approval by Full Council. Timetable for approval agreed with external audit.
3. The Annual Governance Statement is reviewed, challenged and approved by the authority	Annual Governance Statement reviewed by Annual Governance Statement Senior Officer Group and Management Team, reviewed / recommended for approval by Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, and approved by Full Council.
4. The Annual Governance Statement incorporates all the required elements of the statement on internal control.	CIPFA Finance Advisory Network guidance has been closely followed to ensure all required elements are incorporated.
Objective 8 – Report to cabinet / executive committee:	
Step 1: In support of objective 8 – An annual report to the authority (or delegated committee) on the Annual Governance Statement is presented, in accordance with the CIPFA pro forma	
Examples of Assurance	Council Assessment / Evidence / Action required
1. Responsibility for reporting is clearly defined	Defined within Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee reports July 2011.
2. The signatories to the annual governance assurance statement and SIC are defined and are appropriate in accordance with statutory requirements (i.e. most senior officer and most senior member of the organisation)	Annual Governance Statement to be signed by Leader of the Council and Chief Executive Officer.
3. The report is likely to be published in a timely fashion with the statutory accounts.	The Annual Governance Statement will accompany the annual accounts.

2006-07 Assurance Framework Reference	Action / Development	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress to Date
3.1.4	Further improve communication of Anti Fraud and Anti Corruption Strategy by including within the staff handbook.	Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development	Action Achieved	<p>The Anti Fraud and Anti Corruption Strategy is held on the intranet under "Policies & Procedures (things you should know about your employment)", whilst reference to the document and links to it are also included within the fraud awareness page on the intranet.</p> <p>An easy to use and interactive fraud awareness e-learning module has been designed. The purpose of the module is to ensure that staff at all levels are aware of their responsibilities, in terms of preventing and identifying fraud and reporting any concerns they have, along with highlighting the policies and documents that support the anti-fraud culture of the organisation.</p> <p>A number of fraud messages have been included within the council's weekly staff newsletter to remind staff of their responsibilities regarding:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interests, gifts and hospitality; • Expenses claims; and • Information security. <p>In addition, annual reminders continue to be sent to Members advising them of the arrangements for reporting anything within the council they are concerned with.</p>
3.1.7	Further improve communication of Scheme of Delegation by including an annual reminder in 'Teamwork'.	Internal Audit Manager	Action Achieved	<p>The Scheme of Delegation has been amended to take into account changes to the organisational structure, with a revised version issued in October 2009.</p> <p>The council has recently drafted a Scheme of Financial Delegation which is incorporated within the Constitution.</p> <p>An article has been included within e-teamwork to raise awareness of both the Scheme of Delegation and Scheme of Financial Delegation.</p>

	Revise / update the Corporate Business Continuity Plan	Chief Finance Officer	Action Achieved	In coordination with the Joint Emergency Planning Unit at SCC, a workshop was held at SEBC with all staff responsible for critical services; action cards were updated and have since been used during the early stages of the Swine Flu incident. In addition, the Business Continuity Strategy has been updated.
	Revise / update the ICT business continuity plan to reflect changes in technology and ICM contract.	ICT and e-Services Manager	Action Achieved	The ICT Disaster Recovery Plan has been updated (last version February 2008) and the technology content and current ICM Recovery contract has been reflected therein.
3.1.13	Include stress awareness module to sit alongside current annual mandatory health and safety training modules currently on the intranet.	Health & Safety Manager	Action Achieved	Complete as of April 2009

2006- 07 Code of Corporate Governance	Action / Development	Responsible Officer	Completion Date	Progress to Date
3	Review corporate approach to data quality after new standards are published by Audit Commission	Policy Manager	Action Achieved	Data Quality Policy approved in March 2008 and implemented. Annual update provided to Committee in May 2009.
4	Provide profiled financial monitoring reports for all budget holders within 10 working days of the month end.	Chief Financial Officer / Principal Accountant	Action Achieved	Profiled budget monitoring reports are sent to budget managers, Heads of Service, and Corporate Directors within 10 days of the month end.
6	<p>Ensure that the council has identified significant partnerships as part of its internal control processes.</p> <p>Appropriate governance arrangements are in place for each of them.</p>	<p>Heads of Service / Management Team</p> <p>Heads of Service / Management Team</p>	<p>Action Achieved</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The council has adopted a Partnership Strategy, approved on 15 December 2009.</p> <p>Implementation of the Partnership Strategy has begun, with significant partners identified.</p> <p>A process of assessment is currently being undertaken using a partnership self-assessment tool (this focuses on outcomes achieved by the partnership) and a checklist for existing partnerships. The appropriate level of governance can then be applied as necessary.</p>

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

2007-08 Assurance Framework Reference	Action / Development	Responsible Officer	Completion Date	Progress to Date
1.3.4	Consider communication of key documents through the staff induction checklist by referencing to a dedicated area of the intranet where documents relevant to the induction will be held: documents to include Code of Corporate Governance, Corporate Plan, and Constitution.	Head of Human Resources	Action Achieved	A dedicated area of the intranet has been put in place for key induction documents.
(Applying the 6 CIPFA / SOLACE core principles) 1.2.3	Consider drawing up a Scheme of Financial Delegation to include the roles and responsibilities of budget managers and the role of Financial Services, the budget management cycle, together with specific appendices detailing local virement and journal limits and named budget hierarchies.	Chief Finance Officer	Action Achieved	A Scheme of Financial Delegation has been drawn up which sets out in detail exactly what financial responsibilities are delegated and to whom, and what controls are in place for each area of responsibility. The appendix sets out a list of named budget holders. This document was approved by Democratic Renewal Panel on 10 September 2009.
(Applying the 6 CIPFA/SOLACE core principles) 1.3.7 / 1.4.7	Flag all reports with financial implications to ensure they are discussed with the Chief Finance Officer prior to presentation at committee.	Heads of Service	Action Achieved	An agreed process is in place whereby all such reports go to Corporate Management Team / Management Team.

2008-09 Assurance Framework Reference	Action / Development	Responsible Officer	Completion Date	Progress to Date
(Applying the 6 CIPFA/SOLACE core principles) 1.3.3	Review the council's WhistleBlowing Guide	Head of Legal & Democratic Services	End of September 2011	Factual details in the Guide have been changed to reflect the move to West Suffolk House. A full review of the Guide is still to take place.
Objective 3 / Step 1 / 9	A full test against the Disaster Recovery Plan to be completed during 2009/10.	Systems Development and ICT Security Manager	Action Achieved	In August 2009 a full wholesale test of the ICT disaster recovery arrangements was carried out to make sure the council's servers were recoverable, whilst individual file restores take place periodically. A further (successful) test took place with the supplier in May 2010.

Findings will be raised in an internal audit report with actions taken in this respect monitored through the normal audit process. Such actions have therefore not been included in the above action plan.

Glossary of Abbreviations

AGS – Annual Governance Statement
BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicators
BVPP – Best Value Performance Plan
CAA – Comprehensive Area Assessment
CFO – Chief Finance Officer
CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CIPFA FAN – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Finance Advisory Network
CPA – Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CMT – Corporate Management Team
DR-IVE - Dynamic Review – Innovation, Value and Enterprise
ICT – Information and Communication Technologies
KPIs – Key Performance Indicators
LAA – Local Area Agreement
LGR – Local Government Reorganisation
MT – Management Team
PACE – Police and Criminal Evidence Act
PDR – Performance Development Review
RIPA - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
SIC – Statement on Internal Control
SCI – Statement of Community Involvement
SOLACE - Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SSP – Suffolk Strategic Partnership
UoR – Use of Resources
WSLSP - West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership