

Appendix 5A

Improvement and assurance framework

Revised draft

[WORK IN PROGRESS]

What do councils do to assure themselves? – internal actions

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Corporate directors – operational delivery (inc benchmarking)

- Directorate assurance statements
- Project/ programme management
- Data quality assurance
- Performance appraisals
- Reviews of joint ventures/ local authority trading companies/ partnerships
- Performance/ finance/ risk reporting – inc:
 - Corporate plan objectives delivery
 - Statutory performance compliance (eg planning applications, FOIs)
 - National reporting (eg ASCOF)
 - Savings delivery
 - Complaints
- Internal audit advice
- Children's/ Adults Safeguarding Boards
- Consultation/ engagement
- Training/ compliance with policies/ processes

Corporate programme/ project management

Head of Paid Service

- Review corporate performance reporting to inform actions to ensure appropriate number, grades, organisation, management of staff for discharge of functions
- Ensure appropriately senior/ skilled staff employed for:
 - Risk management
 - Health and safety
 - Emergency planning
- Ensure appropriate person leads review of controls, consistent with CIPFA/ SOLACE guidance
- Adopt/ review whistleblowing policy

Corporate management team – operational and strategic delivery (inc benchmarking)

- Performance, finance and risk reporting – inc:
 - Corporate plan objectives delivery
 - Statutory performance compliance (eg planning applications, FOIs)
 - National reporting (eg ASCOF)
 - Savings/ MTFS delivery
 - Complaints
 - Corporate health indicators (eg staff turnover, grievances)
 - Staff/ resident surveys
- Contribute to review of internal controls/ Annual Governance Statement
- Consider/ respond to Internal/ External Audit annual opinions/ reports

Monitoring Officer

- Responsible for/ regularly review constitution - consistency with legislation/ best practice
- Oversight of arrangements for member decision making - compliance with constitution/ legislation and scrutiny (*working with Democratic Services*)
- Principal adviser to Standards Committee

S151 officer

Oversight of financial affairs to ensure proper administration (inc budget-setting/ budgetary controls, counter fraud policy, procurement processes)

Head of internal audit

- Prepare/ implement annual internal audit plan
- Audit governance/ risk/ controls/ policies/ processes/ reporting
- IA QA & improvement programme

'Golden Triangle' meetings

Monitoring Officer with s151 officer

- Scheme of delegation

Senior Information Risk Owner/ Caldicott Guardian

Designated responsibility for information governance/ protection of confidentiality of health and care information/ ensuring proper use

What do councils do to assure themselves? – activity by Members and officers

Community safety partnership – oversight of development/ implementation of strategies (Crime & Disorder Act, 1998)

Professional advice to inform member decision making

Portfolio Holder/ Director regular review of performance/ finance risk

Commission peer-led reviews from

- LGA
- Regional networks
- Professional bodies

Establish a **Council Improvement Board** where appropriate

What do councils to do assure themselves? – externally visible actions

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Executive/ Policy & Resources Committee – reviews performance, finance and risk reporting on strategic delivery, inc:

- Corporate plan objectives delivery
- Statutory performance compliance (eg planning applications, FOIs)
- National reporting (eg ASCOF)
- MTFS delivery
- Corporate health indicators (eg staff turnover, grievances)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) *Supported by Statutory Scrutiny Officer*

- Reviews performance/ finance reports
- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Call-in
- Scrutiny reviews

Appointments Committee - Recommends to full council appointment of appropriately qualified statutory officers

Audit Committee [statutory for CAs only]

- Monitors/ reviews controls, risk management, financial reporting; holds internal/ external audit to account
- Approves internal audit plan, oversees implementation, ensures compliance with PSIAS
- Reviews internal/ external audit reports/ opinions; oversight of management responses
- Assesses own practice/ external review annually

Committee with delegated responsibility for governance

- Reviews Annual Governance Statement
- Oversees regular reviews of constitution

Standards Committee

- Reviews member code of conduct, arrangements for investigating conduct complaints,
- Reviews Monitoring Officer's annual report

Pensions Committee - Reviews member code of conduct, arrangements for investigating conduct complaints (accountable to scheme members)

Individual duty to report to full council:

- Head of Paid Service - arrangements for discharge of authority's functions (s4 report)
- S151 officer – unlawful expenditure/ action (s114 report)
- Monitoring Officer – decisions contravening law; maladministration, injustice (s4 report)
- DCS – sufficiency of resources

Full council

- Considers s25 statement on robustness of estimates/ adequacy of reserves for annual budget/ precept
- Reviews Scrutiny annual report, holds Chair to account
- Reviews Audit Committee annual report, holds Chair to account
- Reviews Standards Committee annual report
- Appoints appropriately qualified statutory officers

What do other bodies do to gain assurance? (non-public)

Grant funding bodies – reporting requirements
(many and varied, including where council is accountable body for other agencies/ wider partnerships)

Regional networks – benchmarking, constructive challenge, improvement support

Government departments – ad hoc requests for information/ assurance

Professional bodies – standard setting, qualifications, capability/ disciplinary procedures:

- CIPFA / ICAEW / ACCA
- Solicitors Regulation Authority/ CILEX/ Legal Services Board
- Faculty of Public Health (appraisal/ revalidation/ recruitment)

DLUHC officials – early engagement to understand challenged councils/ identify support requirements

Political parties – disciplinary/ assurance processes

Where/ how are councils accountable publicly?

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Committee with delegated responsibility for governance

Reviews/ challenges/ approves Annual Governance Statement
(Chief Executive/ Lead member are accountable as signatories to statement)

Audit Committee

- Annual report to full council, including results of annual assessment
- Internal auditor's annual report
- External auditor's annual report and opinion (accounts and vfm judgement)

Overview and Scrutiny - holds executive to account for decisions and actions that affect their communities

Full Council - 'Those charged with governance'

- Ultimate accountability for governance and non-executive functions
- Considers Public Interest Reports, statutory recommendations, advisory notices from external audit
- Agrees annual budget and MTFS, Treasury Management Strategy

Media/ residents/ businesses - can hold council to account through:

- Attending public decision-making/ scrutiny meetings
- Complaints/ redress schemes
- Rights to ask auditor questions/ raise objections

Informed by access to member decision-making reports, Forward Plan, documents published in accordance with Local Government Transparency Code 2015, FOIs/ EIRs/ SARs

Local elections

Informed by manifestos

Reports of Ombudsmen/ inspectors/ regulators

- Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman/ Housing Ombudsman decisions, letters, reports
- Ofsted
- CQC
- HMI Probation
- Building Safety Regulator
- Social Housing Regulator
- Information Commissioner

Government intervention

- Oflog
- Planning designation
- Best Value- non-statutory/ statutory
- Adult social care
- Children's social care - improvement notice/ statutory direction

Parliamentary select committees

Judicial system

- Civil/ criminal litigation
- Judicial review