



NEWPORT
CITY COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS
CASNEWYDD

DRAFT - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

DRAFT

Introduction

Newport City Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and to proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

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 and arrangements for the management of risk.

'CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010)' sets out the governance arrangements which are in place within the Council to ensure sound financial management. The Council's [Code of Corporate Governance](#) sets out its commitment to good Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. The Code was updated in 2019/20 and approved by Cabinet in April 2021.



Purpose of the Annual Governance Statement

The Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides assurances over the effectiveness of Council's Governance arrangements together with identifying areas of future focus and improvement. The AGS is based upon an assessment of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and the 7 principles:

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

The AGS is a requirement of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. It also takes account of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This Statement will be incorporated into the Council's Annual Wellbeing Self-Assessment Report. This Statement demonstrates that Newport City Council is compliant with these regulations for 2023/24.

Sections 2 to 5 of the AGS provides an overview of the Council's Self-Assessment and the recommendations / further actions it needs to undertake to improve its governance arrangements.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the way, which its functions are exercised, having regard to strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, fairness, sustainability, efficiency and innovation. As part of the Act, the Council has to annually self-assess its governance and performance arrangements and to keep under review the extent to which it is fulfilling the 'performance requirements' that is, the extent to which:

- It is exercising its functions effectively;
- It is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- Its governance is effective for securing the above.

To assess the effectiveness of the Council’s governance and performance arrangements, the Act advises that local authorities can integrate its Annual Well-being Report (Well-being of Future Generations Act), AGS and other annual / statutory reports to support the Council’s overall self-assessment. The findings, areas for improvement and actions of this AGS will be integrated into the Council’s annual Well-being Self-Assessment report.

About Newport City Council, Decision Making and its Governance Framework

In 2023/24, Newport City Council consists of 51 elected members representing [21 Wards](#) across Newport. Local Councillors are elected by the community to decide how the Council should carry out its various activities and represent public interest as well as individuals living within the ward.

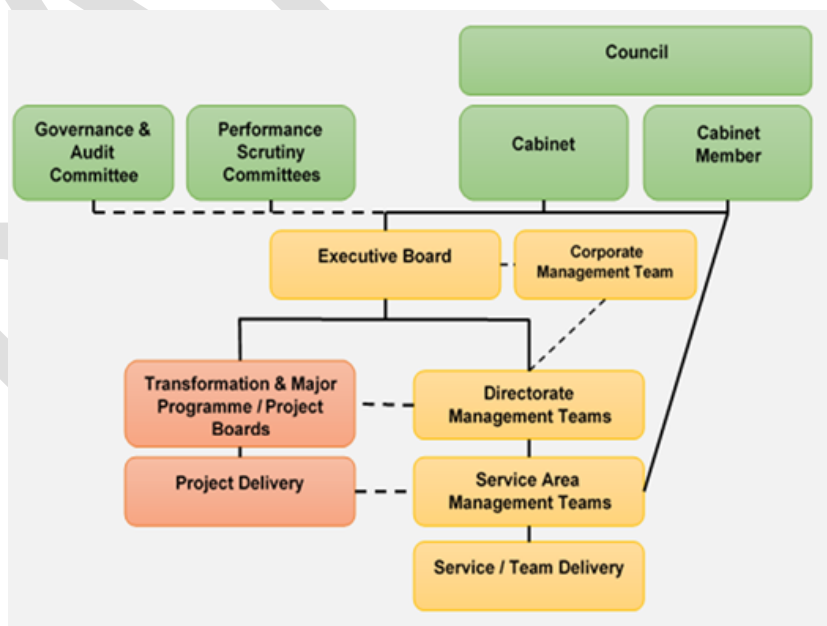
The roles and responsibilities (including decision making) of the Council, its Cabinet and supporting committees are outlined in the [Council’s Constitution](#) which was last updated in March 2024. Officers (employees, staff inc. agency or other non-employed situations) are responsible for carrying out the Council’s functions.

The Cabinet carries out all of the Council’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council (whether by law or under the Council’s Constitution). In 2023/24, the Cabinet consisted of the Leader and 8 other Councillors appointed to the Cabinet to oversee the delivery of specific functions.

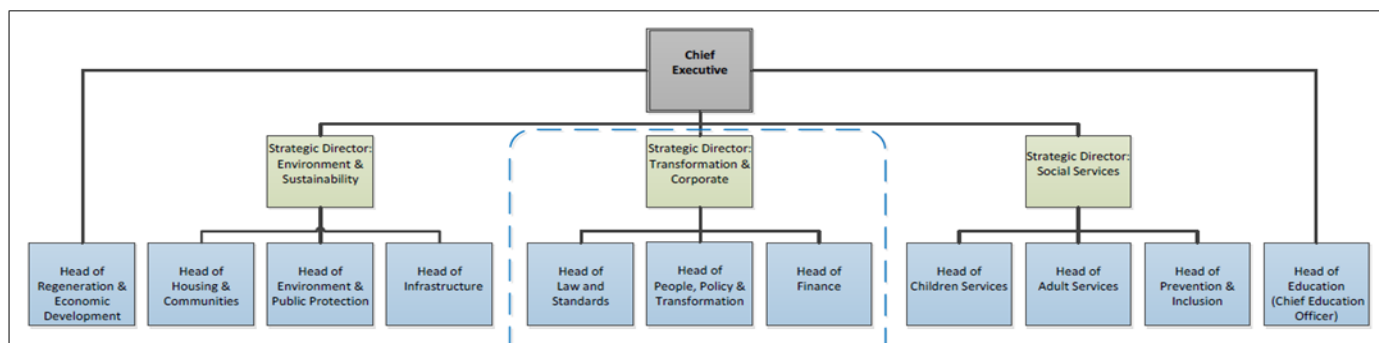
Newport City Council’s [Democratic and Committee structure](#) consists of a wide range Standing Regulatory Committees, Overview & Scrutiny Committees and other committees to enable and support the Council and Cabinet to discharge its duties and responsibilities set out in the Council’s constitution.

The Council’s Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service is the Council’s primary policy advisor and works with elected members and lead the Council’s strategic management team to ensure that direct services to the public and support services are managed effectively and economically to provide best value. To support the Chief Executive the Council has three Strategic Directors and 11 Heads of Service some of whom provide statutory roles:

- Chief Executive & Returning Officer
- Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) – Head of Finance
- Director of Social Services
- Chief Education Officer
- Monitoring Officer – Head of Law & Standards
- Senior Information Risk Owner – Head of Law & Standards
- Proper Officer – Head of Law and Standards



Newport City Council's Structure 2023/24



The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled. The governance framework also sets out 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.

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 an on-going 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. The governance framework has been in place at the Council throughout the year 2023/24, and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

Newport City Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27

The Council's [Corporate Plan](#) for 2022 to 2027 "*An Ambitious, Fairer, Greener Newport for everyone*" sets out the 5 year vision and direction for the Council. This was signed off during 2022/23. The Corporate Plan forms part of the Council's policy framework, and prior to agreement had been through the necessary consultation with scrutiny and members of staff. The Corporate Plan outlines four Well-being Objectives which will support the Well-being of Future Generations Act and local, regional and national delivery. The Well-being Objectives are:

- **Well-being Objective 1 (Economy, Education & Skills)** – Newport is a thriving and growing city that offers excellent education and aspires to provide opportunities for all.
- **Well-being Objective 2 (Newport's Environment & Infrastructure)** – A city that seeks to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing our carbon footprint and preparing for a sustainable and digital future.
- **Well-being Objective 3 (Quality Social Care and Community Services)** – Newport is a supportive city where communities and care are at the heart of what we do.
- **Well-being Objective 4 (An Inclusive, Fair and Sustainable Council)** – Newport City Council is an inclusive organisation that places social value, fairness and sustainability at its core.

The Corporate Plan is delivered through service area plans. Service plans are set in conjunction with Cabinet Members and scrutiny committees to ensure oversight and accountability for the delivery of the actions. An annual report of progress against the Corporate Plan is presented to Cabinet and published so that it can be shared with all employees and members of the public to present an open and transparent view of how the Council is working towards its vision and objectives and how further work will be focused to ensure further improvement.

Regional and Partnership Involvement

Newport City Council is also involved with several regional partnership groups which are responsible for discharging duties prescribed in various legislation. Each of these groups have their own formal governance and performance arrangements which are subject to their own legislative and local arrangements. A summary of the Council's involvement in these groups are outlined below:

- [Gwent Public Services Board \(PSB\)](#) – The Gwent PSB was established by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Gwent PSB includes representatives from other Gwent local authorities, Health, South Wales Fire and Rescue service, Natural Resources Wales. Other strategic partners such as Gwent Police, Public Health Wales, University of South Wales and others are also involved.
- [Cardiff Capital Region \(Corporate Joint Committee\)](#) - The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, allowed for the creation of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) to oversee the delivery of regional development plans, transport plans and economic plans. Similar to local authorities, the CJC has to publish and deliver a [Well-being Plan](#) and further governance arrangements in relation to the CJC are in progress. Further detail on CJC activities can be found [here](#).
- [Gwent Regional Partnership Board \(RPB\)](#) – Local authorities and local health boards are required to establish Regional Partnership Boards under the Partnership Arrangements (Wales) Regulations 2015. The Gwent RPB consists of the Gwent local authorities and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to discharge these duties.

How did we Assess the Effectiveness of our Governance Arrangements in 2023/24?

Using the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, the Council's senior leadership team (Directors and Heads of Service) with support from Transformation & Corporate directorate self-assessed its arrangements against the 7 principles and their 'Sub-principles'. For each Sub-principle the following 3 questions were considered:

1. What arrangements do we have in place to support this (Sub-principle)?
2. What Strengths and Improvements did we make to the arrangements in 2023/24?
3. What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25

To support our assessment, officers considered a wide range of internal and external evidence to demonstrate where the Council was meeting its requirements under the Code of Corporate Governance and also where further improvements need to be undertaken. The table below provides a summary of key evidence and assurance activity to demonstrate how the Council assessed its arrangements and the sources of the evidence received. These are outlined in greater detail in section 3 of the report.

Assurance Required	Evidence of Assurance Received
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achievement of Objectives.• Adherences to ethical standards.• Compliance with laws, regulations, internal policies & procedures.• Standards of conduct and behaviour.• Financial Management including value for money.• Sustainability.• Quality of service delivery.• Management of risk(s).• Accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Constitution.• Codes of Conduct• Corporate / Service policies & procedures.• Council and Cabinet.• Performance Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees.• Governance & Audit Committee• Agendas, minutes and webcasts of Council / Democratic committees.• Executive Leadership Team and statutory officer groups• Internal Audit reports• External Regulator reports (Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales & Estyn)• Other external reports on effectiveness of services• Statutory and discretionary annual reports

Assurance Required	Evidence of Assurance Received
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders • Medium Term Financial Plan, Statement of Accounts • Mid / End of Year Performance Reports • Risk Reports • Counter Fraud arrangements • Annual Well-being and Governance Assessment • End of year performance reports and service plans • Ombudsman's annual letter.

Internal Audit (IA) and Annual Audit Opinion 2023/24

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) state that the '*Chief Audit Executive must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement.*' Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance process. IA provides assurance to the Executive Board, Heads of Service and the Governance & Audit Committee that services are being delivered effectively, efficiently and economically with fraud and error is minimised.

Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24

In the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion, adequate assurance was obtained over the course of 2023/24 resulting in an overall '**Reasonable**' assurance audit opinion to be issued for the Council's internal controls. This was based on the approved audit plan agreed by the Head of Finance and the [Council's Governance & Audit Committee on 25th May 2023](#). The audit work undertaken by the Internal Audit team and the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP).

79% of the approved Audit Plan was completed against the revised target of 50% (usually 80%), with 46 audit opinions issued. Further detail regarding the Internal Audit work undertaken and the team's performance is included within the Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24 which was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee in [May 2024](#). The table below provides an overview of the following opinions issued in 2023/24:

Audit Opinion	No. of Audits (2023/24)	% of Audit Opinions (2023/24)
Substantial	16	35
Reasonable	16	35
Limited	4	9
None	0	0
Other	10	21
Total	46	100

Four 'Limited' audit opinions were issued in 2023/24 for the following areas:

- Private Sector Housing (HMO) – Housing & Communities
- Asylum Seekers Imprest Account – Children Services
- Adoption Allowances Follow Up#2
- Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) Follow Up #1*.

*Note PTU received a substantial audit opinion following the second Follow Up review.

These have been brought to the attention of the Governance & Audit Committee and call ins to Committee have taken place during 2023/24.

It is noted that at the end of quarter 4 following the completion of the 2023/24 Internal Audit plan, the Executive Board agreed for the 'Delivery of the Internal Audit plan risk' to be de-escalated from the Corporate Risk Register. The risk will continue to be monitored in 2024/25 as the Head of Finance reviews and finalises the long-term arrangements of the Internal Audit team.

Audit Wales and Regulatory Reviews 2023/24

Newport City Council is subject to external scrutiny and assessment through 3 regulatory bodies: Audit Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales (Social Services) and Estyn (Education). Other regulators also contribute towards providing assurances on other Council statutory duties when required. Below is a summary of the 3 Regulators outputs on local, national and thematic reports which impact on Council services. Where applicable, these were considered in the Council's AGS assessment. The Council's Governance & Audit Committee are provided regular updates on the reports published and any recommendations raised for the Council to implement.

Audit Wales	Care Inspectorate Wales	Estyn
Local Report - Planning Services in Newport City Council June 2024	National Report – National review of the use of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards in Wales 2022-23 February 2024	Effective Practice – Developing effective provision for learning languages (Langstone Primary School) March 2024
Local Report – Annual Report on Grants Works May 2024	Inspection Report – Parklands February 2024	Inspection Report – Eveswell Primary School February 2024
Local Report – Newport City Council Annual Audit Summary 2023 May 2024	National Report - The Public Law Outline in Wales January 2024	Inspection Report – Somerton Primary School February 2024
Local Report - Digital Strategy Review To Be published	Inspection Report – Children's setting Windmill Farm* November 2023	Thematic Report – Improving attendance in Secondary schools January 2024
Local Report - Use of Performance Information: Service User perspective March 2024	Thematic Report - Report on care homes for children operating without registration (1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023) November 2023	Inspection Report - St Andrew's Primary School January 2024
National Report - Supporting Ukrainians in Wales March 2024	Inspection Report – Children's setting Forest Lodge* October 2023	Thematic Report – The new Additional Learning Needs System: Progress of schools and local authorities in supporting pupils with additional learning needs October 2023
National Report - From Firefighting to Future Proofing, the challenge for Welsh public services February 2024	Inspection Report – Children's setting Oaklands* October 2023	Thematic Report – Jobs Growth Wales+ youth programme: Autumn 2023 insights. Regional report on Jobs Growth Wales+ youth programme in South East Wales October 2023
National Report - Sustainable Development? Making best use of brownfield land and empty buildings January 2024	Joint Thematic Report - Thematic Joint Review (CIW and Estyn) – Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements	Inspection Report 2023 – Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Hael October 2023

Audit Wales	Care Inspectorate Wales	Estyn
Local Report - Newport City Council – Setting of Well-being Objectives November / December 2023	September 2023 Inspection Report – Children’s Setting Brynglas Bungalow*	Inspection Report – Langstone Primary School October 2023
Local Report – Audit of Accounts Report – Newport City Council and Newport City Council Group November 2023	August 2023 Inspection Report - Blaen Y Pant May 2023	Inspection Report – Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Teyrnnon October 2023
National Report – Corporate Joint Committees – Commentary on their progress. November 2023		Joint Thematic Report - Thematic Joint Review (CIW and Estyn) – Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements September 2023
Local Report - Cyber Security Review* August 2023		Thematic Report – Equity of curriculum experiences for pupils who are educated other than at school (EOTAS). June 2023
National Report - Cracks in the Foundations, Building Safety in Wales August 2023		Thematic Report – School Governors Acting as critical friends and the impact of governor training. May 2023
Local Report - Counter Fraud Arrangements – Newport City Council July 2023		Thematic Report – Developing pupils English Reading Skills from 10-14 years of age. May 2023
		Inspection Report - St Woolos Primary School May 2023
		Inspection Report - Pentrepoeth C.P. School May 2023
		Inspection Report – Ysgol Gyfun Gwent Is Coed July 2023
	Inspection Report - St Mary’s R.C. Primary School May 2023	
	Inspection Report - Pillgwenlly C.P. School April 2023	

*Inspection Reports not published as per [Care Inspectorate Wales Policy](#).

Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement Overall Conclusion and Approval Statement 2023/24

The Council has overall assessed its governance arrangements to be effective. The Council has based this upon the assessment completed in the table below and the completion of 13 out of 19 recommendations raised in the 2022/23 review. Actions 'In Progress' from the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement and new actions from 2023/24 have been included in the Action Plan outlined in **Section 3**.

Summary of the Council's Assessment against the Code of Corporate Governance Principles:

Principle	No. of Actions
Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.	7
Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.	4
Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.	5
Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.	3
Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.	2
Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	9
Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.	2

Approval Statement by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Corporate Management Team, relevant officers and the Governance & Audit Committee, and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

Areas to enhance the governance framework already addressed are summarised in this Annual Governance Statement. Areas to be addressed and ensure continuous improvement are set out in Sections 3-5. We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters, to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed Cllr Dimitri Batrouni, Leader of Newport City Council
Date

Signed Beverly Owen, Chief Executive of Newport City Council
Date

Section 3 –2023/24 Assessment against the Code of Corporate Governance and CIPFA Principles

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

The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also for how we use the resources under our stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes we have achieved. In addition, we have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, we can demonstrate the appropriateness of all our actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
Behaving with integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members Code of Conduct in Constitution which reflects Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2016. ▪ Employee Code of Conduct in Constitution (Feb 2023). ▪ Registers of employee declarations / interests and gifts & hospitality. ▪ Induction training for Members and Employees. ▪ Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution. ▪ Whistleblowing Policy (July 2022) ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy (Cabinet – April 2021) ▪ Standards Committee ▪ Standards Committee Annual Report presented to Council. ▪ Member Dispute Resolution ▪ Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy. ▪ Code of Corporate Governance ▪ Monthly staff communications through staff newsletters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Democratic Services implemented Group Leader six-monthly updates to Standards Committee regarding Member training and conduct. ▪ Standards Committee and Democratic Services Annual Reports presented to Council in November 2023 confirming the committees met their legislative requirements. Link to Council agenda containing report here. ▪ Standards Committee reviewed the Gifts and Hospitality declaration forms for Elected Members in April 2024 to ensure more detailed and accurate reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 1 - All member training on role and function of the Planning Committee (Audit Wales Planning Services Report). ▪ Action 2 - Development of e-learning Code of Conduct refresher training for Elected Members. ▪ Action 3 (Carried Forward 22/23) - Review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and communicate the Code of Corporate Governance to all key stakeholders. ▪ Action 4 - Strengthen the reporting of the Council's Fraud Risk Assessment to Governance & Audit Committee..

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan 2022-27. ▪ Contract Standing Orders (2020). ▪ Codes of Conduct for Members and Employees. ▪ Financial Regulations (2016). ▪ Standards Committee meeting quarterly. ▪ Whistleblowing Policy (July 2022) ▪ Employee HR policies and engagement. ▪ Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Annual Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Elected Members completed mandatory Code of Conduct training by April 2023. ▪ Refresher training for Elected Members is completed annually. ▪ People Plan 2023-28 developed - introduced 4 Corporate Values and a Behavioural Framework to support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 5 (Carried Forward 22/23) - Senior management development programme (continues from 23/24) ▪ Action 2 - Development of e-learning Code of Conduct refresher training for Elected Members.
<p>Respecting the rule of law</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member and Employee Codes of Conduct in Constitution. ▪ Role of Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer established in Constitution. ▪ CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer. ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy (Cabinet – April 2021) ▪ Governance & Audit Committee ▪ Internal Audit Section ▪ Internal Audit Annual Report presented to Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ Audit Wales Annual Audit Letter ▪ Standards Committee ▪ Whistleblowing Policy (July 2022) ▪ Customer Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy. ▪ Disciplinary Policy (Dec 2021) ▪ Regulatory Committees – Licensing & Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial review of the Constitution with changes endorsed by Council and published. ▪ Multiple training sessions were held by the Complaints team attended by over 100 Council officers. Various improvements have been made to the capture and analysis of data. Complaints processes were standardised to ensure a maximum of two complaints stages in line with public Services Ombudsman for Wales model policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 6 - Ongoing review of Constitution to align with All-Wales Model Constitution. ▪ Action 7 - Ongoing actions from the Complaints Annual Report, including policy refresh.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>Openness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Committee meeting agendas and papers published in advance of meetings. ▪ Minutes published following meetings. ▪ Decision making process described in Constitution. ▪ Forward Work Programmes published on website showing key decisions to be made by Council and Cabinet. ▪ Consultation and Engagement Strategy & Consultation. ▪ Annual budget consultation Publication Scheme. ▪ Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests. ▪ Customer Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy. ▪ Public questions at Council and Cabinet ▪ Engagement with hard to reach groups such as BME, Disability and LGBTQ+ communities. As well as engagement with children and young people to meet the requirement of the UNCRC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All committee agendas and papers published within statutory deadlines. All available to view on Council website here. ▪ Minutes are published to website within two days of being approved by committee. Regular review to ensure compliance. ▪ NCC website redesign and implementation to make it easier for residents to access services, and council information. ▪ Improvements made in the management of Subject Access requests resulting in improvement in performance from 70.9% to 79.1% in 2023/24 ▪ Housing Transformation Programme are improving service delivery through co-production with service users and lived experiences. Training programme and approach is being shared with the wider organisation on its implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 8 - Review and consider options for improving the recording and publication of senior officer decisions (as part of the Council's Constitution / scheme of delegation review).

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Service Board and One Newport Local Action Plan/Well- Being Plan. ▪ Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet / South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee ▪ Social Services / Health Regional Partnership Board. ▪ Community Safety Partnership. ▪ Partnership agreements including TOR / Contract arrangements. ▪ Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. ▪ Trade Unions engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Housing Forum meets every 6 months bringing together key leader from relevant partners including RSLs, health and the police. ▪ A group strategy meeting is held quarterly between the council, Welsh Government and development colleagues within RSLs to monitor performance and issues in delivering WG and NCC development priorities. ▪ A quarterly meeting is held between Housing Allocation staff and RSLs to ensure the effective delivery of the Common Housing Allocations policy, ▪ The council meets at least quarterly with key RSLs (Newport City Homes, Melin, POBL and Linc) to discuss pertinent issues related to development and joint work between the council and the respective RSL. ▪ From 2023/24, the Council's Environment & Public Protection team established quarterly meetings with Natural Resources Wales. ▪ 4 Headteacher engagement groups supporting the Council's Education team with problem solving and reaching solutions. Groups include: Digital, Additional Learning Needs, School Improvement and Capital Maintenance. ▪ We have an exceptional Welsh in Education Forum to develop the statutory Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. It represents all aspects of Education, Youth, Play and Workforce Planning for 0-25. 	<p>No additional areas or actions identified for improvement.</p>
<p>Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ward role of Councillors / ward meetings. ▪ Review of Public Engagement in Newport City Council. ▪ Participation Strategy 2022-2026 ▪ Have Your Say consultations on NCC Webpage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Democratic Services support two ward meeting cycles per year. ▪ End of Year Service Plan reports 2023/24 were improved to include service area engagement and feedback through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compliments, Comments and Complaints ▪ Service Area Consultations and Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 9 - Review of ward meeting support based on Elected Member and officer survey feedback. ▪ Action 10 - Implementation of Audit Wales recommendations from the Audit Wales Report: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation principles and toolkit available on Intranet. ▪ Compliments, Comments & Complaints Policy and Annual Report. ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan (Budget Proposals) – Public Engagement. ▪ Public wi-fi on Newport Transport buses. ▪ Co-production with service users on care plan support e.g. Corporate Parenting. ▪ Education Services deliver a Pupil Participation network to seek the views and encourage participation for pupils across Newport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case Studies including stakeholder engagement and feedback. ▪ 46 consultations completed in 2023/24 with 12,896 responses received via bus wifi, SNAP survey, Newport Citizen Panel. ▪ Other engagement activities completed in 2023/24 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of Living events ▪ 2 Job Fairs ▪ Volunteering and community group projects / initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 11 (Carried forward 22/23) - Continuation of the Website improvement project to improve access and interaction and quality of information.

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

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the Authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
Defining Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan reviewed annually in accordance with Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and 'Wellbeing Objectives' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progress on the delivery of the Corporate Plan for 2022/23 reported through the Annual Corporate Plan Self-Assessment report to (Governance & Audit Committee (September 23), Overview Management Scrutiny Committee) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 12 - Audit Wales review of the Council's Corporate Plan and setting of its Well-being Objectives raised a recommendation for the Council to monitor progress against long and short term objectives and progress against

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<p>in Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other strategic plans to support Corporate responsibilities e.g. Climate Change Plan, Local Area Energy Plan, Welsh Language Plan etc. ▪ Annual and Mid-year Performance Monitoring Reports. ▪ Annual Self-Assessment Review. ▪ Well-being Plan 2018-23 produced by Public Service Board (One Newport) ▪ Service Plans reviewed annually by each Head of Service. ▪ Monthly Performance and Financial Monitoring meetings held for each service area. ▪ Corporate Performance and Planning Policy and Risk Management Policy. ▪ Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report. ▪ Regional Partnership Board and market position statement. 	<p>(October 23), Cabinet (October 23) and Council (November 23).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Report is available here. ▪ 11 End of Year reports 2022/23 reported to Performance Scrutiny Committees in July 2023. 2022/23 End of year reports to be reported in Quarter 1 2024/25. ▪ Mid-Year service area reports reported to Performance Scrutiny Committees in November 2023. Summary Mid-year review report presented to Cabinet in January 2024. ▪ End of Year Service Plans 2023/24 reviewed and to be presented to Performance Scrutiny Committees in July 2024. ▪ Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report presented to Planning Committee in March 2024. ▪ Audit Wales Review on the Council setting its Well-being Objectives (Corporate Plan 2022-27) reported the Council had applied the Sustainable Development principles. 	<p>objectives that cut across multiple of its own services and other organisations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 13 - Strategic planning sessions for senior management. ▪ Action 14 - Service areas to implement the feedback and recommendations from the Executive Board Challenge Reviews.
<p>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan covering 3 financial years approved annually by Council. ▪ Strategic Plan for Procurement 2020-2024. ▪ Corporate Plan 2022-2027 ▪ Climate Change Plan 2022-2027 ▪ FEIAs including Socio-Economic Duty. ▪ Performance and Planning Policy and Risk Management Policy ▪ Cabinet Reports and Scrutiny Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2023/24 the Council reported the Council's Social Value Outcomes in Procurement to Cabinet in February 2024. ▪ Redeveloped the Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment and training during the year. FEIAs consistently published on the Council's website. ▪ Performance and Risk policy and procedures update ▪ Revised Strategic Equalities Plan and objectives for 2024-2028 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 15 - Further review of FEIAs in line with the new Strategic Equalities Plan 2024- (care leaver characteristic) ▪ Action 16 - Arrangements for the new Procurement Act including training

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One Newport (PSB) / / Marmot Principles (Fair Society Healthy Lives) ▪ New regional Area Plan 2023/24 signed off by RPB and submitted to Welsh Government on behalf of NCC. 		

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

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource input while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>Determining interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate Plan 2022-27. ▪ PSB Well-being Plan 2018-22 and new one 2023-28. ▪ New regional Area Plan 2023/24 signed off by RPB and submitted to Welsh Government on behalf of NCC. ▪ Officer review of Welsh Government Legislation including Cabinet / Cabinet Member reports as necessary. ▪ Performance Scrutiny Committee. ▪ Performance & Planning Policy and Risk Management Policy. ▪ Finance and Legal implications considered in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports. ▪ Options for decision making considered in all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports. ▪ Council / Cabinet / Cabinet Member reports. ▪ Results of consultation exercises ▪ Fairness Equality Impact Assessment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and improvement of Democratic Services intranet pages to ensure up to date report templates in place with officer guidance signposted. ▪ Specialist financial planning support for schools. This collaborative, early insight into forecast school deficits has prevented deficit by sharing effective cost savings. There is an evidence base to show that there are less schools in deficit at present. ▪ Executive Board Challenge Reviews and assessment of performance and risk. Outcomes and actions provided to service areas on areas of improvement. ▪ Scheme of delegation (Constitution) changes approved by Council on budget process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 17 - Democratic Services developing resources and training for officers around report writing for Scrutiny and other committees to ensure consistency. ▪ Action 18 (Carried Forward 22/23) - Continuation of the 2022/23 action on the development of the Council's Transformation Programme. ▪ Action 19 - Further review of scheme of delegation – Assets amendments approved by Council on assets (April 2024).
<p>Planning interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of Public Engagement in Newport City Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Board Peer / Challenge Reviews and assessment of performance and risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No areas or actions identified for improvement.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths identified and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance (Finance, Human Resources and service plans), Risks and strategic planning reported to Executive Board, CMT, DMT and service management teams. ▪ Mid-year and End of Year performance reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet. ▪ Quarterly reporting of performance and risk. ▪ Annual budget setting process in place including internal budget challenge sessions and a public consultation exercise. ▪ Annual Service Plan review and updates. ▪ Financial Regulations (2016). ▪ Senior Management Structure. ▪ School Development Plan Professional discussions. 	<p>Outcomes and actions provided to service areas on areas of improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transformation plans – including Housing and eliminate / assets 	
<p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet. ▪ Medium Term Financial Plan. ▪ Budget consultation. ▪ End of year performance reviews to Scrutiny and Cabinet. ▪ Quarterly performance and risk updates to senior officer groups, Cabinet Members. ▪ Service area Peer / Challenge Reviews by Executive Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reporting of the Council's Social Value Outcomes in Procurement to Cabinet in February 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No areas or actions identified for improvement

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

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mindset, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>Developing the entity's capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular check-ins for all staff as part of managing employee performance. ▪ Provision of Wellbeing Check-ins for managing workforce Wellbeing ▪ Governance structure to ensure leadership and governance arrangements in place. ▪ Service planning process includes workforce planning. ▪ Quarterly financial and performance reports to Cabinet. ▪ Partnership & collaborative working arrangements e.g. PSB, RPB, Regional working. ▪ Trainee and apprenticeship schemes in place. ▪ Reporting the work of the Responsible Individual (RI) under RISCA to Executive Board on a regular cycle (Social Services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asset Rationalisation Board and Strategic Asset Management Group assessing the Council's effective use of its assets. ▪ Review of Wellbeing at Work policy with trade unions and Cabinet Member agreement. ▪ Approval and rollout of the Council's People Plan 2023-28 in January 2024. Creation of Apprenticeship posts using Shared Prosperity Funding, deployed across multiple service areas within the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 20 - Sign off and implementation of Wellbeing at Work enhancements. ▪ Action 21 - Employee development e.g. Housing culture and development, employee training.
<p>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member/Officer Protocol in Constitution. ▪ Scheme of Delegation published in Constitution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updates to the Scheme of Delegation with consultation with Democratic Services Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 5 (Carried Forward 2022/23) - Management development programme' for Executive Directors and Heads of Services

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>other individuals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monthly One to One meeting are held involving the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Heads of Service and 3rd tier staff. ▪ Newport Managers Network ▪ Councillor Training Programme developed based on a Training Needs Assessment. ▪ Continual performance review for all staff under check-ins (iTrent). ▪ Occupational Health and Wellness at Work policy exists with aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of all employees to enable them to achieve their full potential at work. ▪ Action plans within Internal Audit reports. ▪ Lessons Learnt – Central Accountancy / External Audit. ▪ Trainee and apprenticeship schemes in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCC Coaching network – ongoing support for managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 6 - Ongoing review of the Constitution with reference to the All Wales model.

Principle F — Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will ensure financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
<p>Managing Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk Management Policy in place including risk appetite statement. ▪ Corporate / service area risks monitored every quarter. ▪ Corporate Risk Register reviewed by the Executive Board and Directorate Management Teams. ▪ Governance & Audit Committee & Cabinet reporting on risk once a quarter. ▪ Risk Management integrated into Cabinet and Cabinet Member reports. ▪ Annual Digital report presented to Overview Scrutiny Management Committee. ▪ Regulatory bodies and Cabinet / senior officers annual risk assessment. ▪ Scheme of delegation, the Head of Law & Standards includes the role of the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO). ▪ Information Governance Group meetings take place quarterly and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk Management Policy (inc Risk Appetite Statement) involved and approved by Cabinet in March 2023. Policy supports the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities. ▪ Risk Management Policy development included the views of Cabinet, Corporate Management Team (via collaborative workshop in October 2023) and Governance & Audit Committee (January 2024). ▪ Risk Management training delivered to Governance & Audit Committee in January 2024. ▪ Executive Board Peer / Challenge Reviews completed in 2023/24 examining service areas risk and performance. ▪ Internal Audit review of the Council's Risk Management arrangements was completed in January 2024 and provided the highest 'Substantial' rating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 22 - Report the outcomes of the Fraud Risk Assessment to Governance & Audit Committee and to provide ongoing periodic reporting. ▪ Action 23 - Audit Wales completed a review of the Council's Cyber Security arrangements. Implementation of recommendations from the Audit Wales review of the Council's Cyber Security arrangements. ▪ Action 24 - Follow up actions relating to Information Risk are identified annually in the Annual Information Risk Report, reported to Scrutiny.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<p>an Information Risk Register is maintained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Information Risk Report. ▪ The annual budget setting and closure of accounts processes consider financial risks facing the authority and makes provision for these where appropriate and affordable. 		
<p>Managing Performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance and Planning Policy is in place. ▪ Performance against Corporate Plan reviewed annually (reported in Autumn). ▪ Mid-Year Review and End of Year Review of service plan delivery with Scrutiny and Cabinet. ▪ Quarterly performance reviews by Executive Board and Directorate Management Teams. ▪ Service Plans and performance measures reviewed annually. ▪ Scrutiny function ▪ Other annual performance reports produced on subject topic areas and regulatory requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ End of Year Service Plan reports 2023/24 were improved to include service area engagement and feedback through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compliments, Comments and Complaints ▪ Service Area Consultations and Engagement ▪ Case Studies including stakeholder engagement and feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 10 - Implementation of Audit Wales recommendations from the Audit Wales Report: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Report from Director of Social Services. ▪ Annual Safeguarding Report. ▪ Annual Digital Report ▪ Annual Welsh Language Report ▪ Annual Equalities Report ▪ Local Development Plan annual monitoring report. ▪ Annual Statement of Accounts ▪ The role of the Council's Responsible Individuals in ensuring regulatory compliance, improvement and safety 		
<p>Robust Internal Control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governance & Audit Committee provide assurance on effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance processes. ▪ Governance & Audit Committee Annual Performance Review ▪ Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report to Council. ▪ Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy (Cabinet April 2021) ▪ Role of Internal Audit Section (Internal Audit Charter) ▪ Annual IA Plans approved by Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ Annual IA Reports & quarterly Plan v Progress reports to Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ G&AC Call in of Unfavourable audit opinions. ▪ All waivers of Contract Standing Orders and urgent decisions are reported through the Governance & Audit Committee quarterly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivered the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 22 - Report the outcomes of the Fraud Risk Assessment to Governance & Audit Committee and to provide ongoing periodic reporting. ▪ Action 25 - To resolve the internal audit medium to long term arrangements to strengthen resilience of the service. ▪ Action 26 - To improve the monitoring and follow up of recommendations from Internal Audit reviews.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil Contingencies / Business Continuity arrangements to manage community risk. ▪ Annual Governance Statement ▪ Financial Regulations (2016) ▪ Contract Standing Orders (2020) 		
Managing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data Protection Policy (2019) ▪ Information Governance Group in place. ▪ Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) in place. ▪ Information Asset Register ▪ Information sharing guidance published. ▪ Information Risk Policy ▪ Business Continuity arrangements in place. ▪ Annual Information Risk report to Scrutiny Management Committee and Cabinet Member. ▪ Freedom of Information and Subject Access Request policies and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvements to the process of managing SARs. ▪ Policies reviewed and refreshed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 27 - Review quality of Planning Performance data submitted to Welsh Government. ▪ Action 28 - Ongoing information management policy refresh to ensure consistency and currency, reviewed in the Annual Information Risk Report.
Strong public financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Regulations (2016) in Constitution ▪ Contract Standing Orders (2020) in Constitution ▪ Accounting Instructions on Intranet. ▪ Treasury Management Strategy & Annual Outturn Report ▪ Capital Strategy (including Capital Programme) ▪ Strategic Asset Management Group (SAMG) ▪ Monthly monitoring and reporting of service area revenue budgets. ▪ Regular monitoring of capital budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Capital Assurance Group was introduced during 2023/24. The role of this group is to provide greater assurance regarding the delivery of the capital programme, as well act as a gateway for additions and amendments to the programme. ▪ A revised approach to budget monitoring was introduced, which placed further emphasis of key risk areas, but also in creating capacity for finance business partners to provide added-value support to service areas. ▪ Strategic Asset Management Plan reviewed and updated(published here) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 29 - Increase of Finance capacity to support of the Council's Transformation Programme to ensure that planned changes are subject to adequate financial review and challenge. ▪ Action 30 - Introduction of the new finance system and the improved reporting and visibility of financial information, giving senior managers greater insights to support decision making.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements do we have in place to support this?	Strengths and Improvements made in 2023/24	What areas / actions have we identified for Improvement in 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring reports presented to Executive Board, DMT, CMT and service area management teams. ▪ Peer / challenge reviews on finance / budget setting. ▪ Revenue Budget Monitor & Capital Reports to Cabinet. ▪ Regular reporting on NCC response to External Pressures impacting Council Services (cost of living crises) 		

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

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements are in place to support this?	Strengths / Changes / Improvements made to arrangements in 2023/24	Areas / Actions identified for Improvement Action(s) 2024/25
<p>Implementing good practice in transparency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report templates exist to ensure consistency in reports. ▪ Annual Reports and Self-Assessment of Governance and performance arrangements. ▪ NCC Transparency Webpage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Webpages reviewed and improved as part of the website development. ▪ Schools' PDG grant spends are recorded, planned and checked to ensure they have a clear evidence base for their intended purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 31 - Review Planning Committee Protocol to clarify speaking and voting rights of committee members and ensure this is reflected within the Council Constitution
<p>Implementing good practices in reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual Statement of Accounts audited by external auditor and approved by Council. ▪ NCC Code of Corporate Governance based on CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 2016 (2020/21) ▪ Annual Governance Statement as part of the Statement of Accounts. ▪ Annual Self-Assessment of Performance. ▪ Annual Performance report ▪ 6 monthly service plan reviews and reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet. ▪ Annual reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet. ▪ Reports by Responsible Individuals about individual regulated service are reported directly to Director of Social Services in whole and regularly to Executive Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All schools have annual School Development Plan Professional Discussions to consider their priorities and to ensure that Estyn recommendations are progressing. This session provides early intervention and support to schools to prevent them becoming a School Causing Concern. ▪ Whole organisation approach to the AGS (this document) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No further areas or actions identified for 2024/25

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements are in place to support this?	Strengths / Changes / Improvements made to arrangements in 2023/24	Areas / Actions identified for Improvement Action(s) 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive Board approves annual compliance statements of regulated social care services prior to submission to Regulator 		
Assurance and effective accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Audit and regulatory assurance provided by Audit Wales, Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales ▪ Regular liaison meetings between the Council and the 3 regulators. ▪ Annual meeting between the 3 external regulators, Cabinet and senior officers completed in March 2024. ▪ Six monthly reports on Audit Wales and Regulatory activity to Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ Performance of Internal Audit Section monitored by Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ Internal Audit annual report to Governance & Audit Committee. ▪ Internal management structure / governance arrangements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Executive Board (Chief Exec & Directors) II. Corporate Management Team (Chief Exec / Directors / Heads of Service) III. Directorate Management Teams (Directors and Heads of Service) ▪ Annual Governance Statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GAC Call Ins for unsatisfactory opinions and follow ups in: May 2023; July 2023; January 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 32 - Further to the Auditor General's letter to all Chief Executive's in Wales on the presentation of regulatory reports to democratic committees, the Council will take the opportunity to review the current processes and where necessary improve any existing arrangements.

Sub-Principles	What Arrangements are in place to support this?	Strengths / Changes / Improvements made to arrangements in 2023/24	Areas / Actions identified for Improvement Action(s) 2024/25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="376 209 792 296">▪ Annual meeting between external regulators and Cabinet / Senior Officers.<li data-bbox="376 300 792 355">▪ Planning appeal decisions reported to Planning Committee		

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Section 4 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 Action Plan Update

The table below an update on the actions identified in the 2022/23 AGS. Any actions in progress at the end of March 2024 will be carried forward into 2024/25 action plan.

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	2023/24 Update / Evidence
1	Communicate the revised Code of Corporate Governance to all jointly managed and shared service organisations and that assurance on compliance is received for the Annual Governance Statement.	C/F from previous action plan (see below)	Transformation & Corporate / Finance	1 st April 2023	31 st March 2024	In Progress Due to resourcing issues within the Internal Audit team this action will be actioned in 2024/25. (See also action No 6).
2	Transformation approach under development June 2023. The first programmes have commenced and new project management documentation is being reviewed. Clear owners (SROs) are established for the programme, and the escalation is to Executive Board. Planning and Performance Policy update reviewed by Scrutiny and Cabinet Member report will go through the democratic process June 2023.	C/F from 2021/22 action plan	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	Ongoing	31 st March 2024	Complete Project Management toolkit in place and available on the Council's Intranet. All projects have identified Senior Responsible Officers and mechanisms in place to monitor, escalate and report delivery. The Council's Performance and Planning Policy was approved by Cabinet Member in July 2023 . The Council's Risk Management Policy was approved by Cabinet in March 2024
3	Launch / Introduce new People Plan.	A – Behaving with Integrity	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	1 st April 2023	31 st December 2023	Complete The new People Plan was approved by Cabinet January 2024, after extensive engagement within the organisation. The People Plan and employee values were also launched April 2024.
4	Development of a Fraud Risk Assessment.	A – Behaving with Integrity	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st July 2023	30 th September 2024	Complete Fraud risk assessment completed in April 2024 and will be reported to GAC in 2024/25 following review by the Executive Board.

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	2023/24 Update / Evidence
5	Review Counter Fraud arrangements and strengthen reporting in this area.	A – Behaving with Integrity	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st July 2023	30 th September 2024	In Progress Following the completion of the Fraud Risk Assessment above and its reporting to GAC the Chief Internal Auditor will report on fraud arrangements on a more regular basis from 2024/25 onwards. This will include progress on NFI as well as specific audits related to the risk assessments.
6	NCC Code of Corporate Governance to be reviewed / updated.	A – Behaving with Integrity	Transformation & Corporate Finance Law & Standards	1 st July 2023	30 th September 2024	In Progress Due to resourcing issues within the Internal Audit team this action will be actioned in 2024/25.
7	Creation of an employee values and behaviour framework and policy	A - Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	People, Policy & Transformation	1 st June 2023	31 st March 2024	Complete The Values & Behaviours of the organisation are encompassed within the Councils new People Plan. This was agreed by Cabinet in January 2024, after extensive engagement within the organisation. The People Plan, and employee values and behaviours launched April 2024.
8	Developments to Council website to improve access and interaction and quality of information	B - Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	People, Policy & Transformation	1 st June 2023	31 st March 2025	In Progress First phase of website launched in February 2024 following engagement with citizens, service users and service areas through focus groups and events. The new website is fully accessible and bilingual. Development continues and further phases will be published during 2024-25

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	2023/24 Update / Evidence
9	As part of wider Customer Services review; engage with users / customers to assess experience and ease of use of on-line 'My Council Services' system	B - Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	Finance	30 Oct 2023	30 th March 2024	Complete Reported to Executive Board and an action plan is being drafted.
10	Application of TOMs to procurement exercises threshold to be reduced to those above £175k to capture more spend / contracts where this is applied and assessed against	B - Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Finance	1 st April 2023	30 th September 2023	Complete This has been completed and implemented into ongoing processes.
11	Establish 'capital assurance group' to provide oversight on behalf of Executive Board on capital schemes and contribution to achieve Council priorities	D - Determining interventions D - Optimising achievement of intended outcomes F - Managing Performance	Finance	1 st April 2023	1 st September 2023	Complete Meeting regularly and chaired by Chief Executive or Corporate Director.
12	Transformation approach and programme to be fully developed and reported	D - Determining interventions	People, Policy & Transformation	1 April 2023	31 st March 2024	In Progress Projects and programmes that support and deliver transformational change have commenced and progress is reported through service plans. Standardised project documentation has been agreed and consistent reporting is now in place. Work continues to develop the transformation approach which is service and evidence led. The agreed People Plan and Digital Strategy support this

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	2023/24 Update / Evidence
						approach through their skills themes.
13	Introduce service on-going challenge reviews, and work to develop employee check-ins.	D - Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	People, Policy & Transformation	1 April 2023	30 th Sept 2023	Complete Challenge reviews implemented and continuing in delivery into 2023/24. Employee Check Ins are now embedded and 2023/24 has seen the Council's target achieved. Continuous support and development provided by the Council's HR team.
14	Appointment of a second Responsible Individual (RI) to ensure independent oversight as defined in the legislation for regulated services within Social Services Development of agreed reporting structure for the RIs	E - Developing the entity's capacity	Social Care	1 st April 2023	31 st March 2024	Complete Second RI is now registered with CIW. RI for children's services is drawn from Adult Services; RI for Adult Services is drawn from Children's Services to ensure separation of day-to-day responsibilities and legal oversight to ensure independence, transparency and challenge.
15	Management development programme' for Executive Directors and Heads of Services rolled out in 2023/24	E - Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	People, Policy & Transformation	1 st September 2023	30 th June 2024	In Progress The management development programme for CMT has been rolled out and will complete in 2024-25.
16	Understanding the workforce capacity and capability to deliver the Transformation Plan and Corporate Plan objectives.	E – Developing the Entity's Capacity	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	1 st April 2023	31 st December 2023	Complete An analysis of the capacity and capability was undertaken to understand any organisational development programme requirements. Transformation projects are supported by standard project management principles.
17	Include all external grant programmes into the council's gross budget to ensure included	F - Strong public financial management	Finance	1 April 2023	30 th September 2024	Complete Budget modelling includes work to identify and include external grants

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	2023/24 Update / Evidence
	<p>in the council's financial management arrangements.</p> <p>Review and re-structure the business support function who support the significant grant funded programmes across Housing and Communities, Prevention and Inclusion and regeneration & Economic Development services. This will provide improved corporate governance of the grant funded programmes and clarity between financial administration and more strategic financial management support.</p>		<p>Housing & Communities</p> <p>Prevention & Inclusion</p> <p>Regeneration & Inclusion</p>			with an expectation that spending plans for these are also included as much detail as possible.
18	Finalise and Implement new Risk Management Policy.	F – Managing Risk	<p>Transformation & Corporate</p> <p>People, Policy & Transformation</p>	1 st April 2023	31 st December 2023	<p>Complete</p> <p>The Council's Risk Management Policy was reviewed and approved by Cabinet in March 2024.</p>
19	Timely sign off of 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.	G – Implementing Good Practices in Reporting	<p>Transformation & Corporate</p> <p>Finance</p>	1 st April 2023	31 st December 2023	<p>Complete</p> <p>Accounts signed off end of November 2023.</p>

Section 5 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 Action Plan Update

The below Action Plan will be monitored and reported in 2024/25 and also included in the Council's Annual Well-being Self-Assessment report 2023/24. Ongoing actions from 22/23 action plan will be carried forward.

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date
1	Deliver all Member training on the role and function of Planning	A – Behaving with Integrity	Regeneration and Economic Development	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
2	Development of e-learning Code of Conduct refresher training for Elected Members	A – Behaving with Integrity	Law & Standards / Democratic Services	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
3	Carried Forward from AGS 2022/23 Action Plan Review the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and communicate the Code of Corporate Governance to all key stakeholders.	A – Behaving with Integrity	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
4	Carried Forward from AGS 2022/23 Action Plan Strengthen the reporting of the Council's Fraud Risk Assessment to Governance & Audit Committee.	A – Behaving with Integrity F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
5	Carried Forward from AGS 2022/23 Action Plan Management development programme' for Executive Directors and Heads of Services	A – Behaving with Integrity C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits. E - Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	1 st September 2023	31 st March 2025
6	Ongoing review of the Constitution with reference to the All Wales model.	A – Behaving with Integrity E - Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	Transformation & Corporate Law & Standards	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
7	Ongoing actions from the Complaints Annual Report, including policy refresh.	A – Behaving with Integrity	Transformation & Corporate	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date
			People, Policy & Transformation		
8	Review and consider options for improving the recording and publication of senior officer decisions (as part of the Council's Constitution / scheme of delegation review).	B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.	Transformation & Corporate Law & Standards	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
9	Review of ward meeting support based on Elected Member and officer survey feedback.	B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.	Transformation & Corporate Law & Standards	1 st April 2024	30 th September 2024
10	Implementation of Audit Wales recommendations from the Audit Wales Report: Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective.	B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement. F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
11	Carried Forward from AGS 2022/23 Action Plan Continuation of the Website improvement project to improve access and interaction and quality of information.	B - Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	People, Policy & Transformation	1 st June 2023	31 st March 2025
12	Implementation of Audit Wales recommendation from the Setting of Well-being Objectives report.	C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
13	Strategic planning sessions for senior management.	C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.	All service areas Supported Transformation by Corporate &	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
14	Service areas to implement the feedback and recommendations from the Executive Board Challenge Reviews.	C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.	All service areas	1 st April 2024	30 th September 2024

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date
			Supported by Transformation Corporate &		
15	Further review of FEIAs in line with the new Strategic Equalities Plan 2024-28 (care leaver characteristic)	C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.	Transformation Corporate & People, Policy Transformation &	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
16	Arrangements for the new Procurement Act including training	C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.	Transformation Corporate & Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
17	Democratic Services developing resources and training for officers around report writing for Scrutiny and other committees to ensure consistency.	D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.	Transformation Corporate & People, Policy Transformation &	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
18	Carried Forward from 2022/23 Transformation approach and programme to be fully developed and reported	D - Determining interventions	People, Policy Transformation &	1 April 2023	31 st March 2025
19	Further review of scheme of delegation – Assets amendments approved by Council on assets (April 2024).	D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.	Transformation Corporate & Law & Standards People, Policy Transformation &	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
20	Sign off and implementation of Wellness at Work enhancements.	E - Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	Transformation Corporate & People, Policy Transformation &	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date
21	Employee development e.g. Housing culture and development, employee training.	E - Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	Environment & Sustainability Housing & Communities	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
22	Report the outcomes of the Fraud Risk Assessment to Governance & Audit Committee and to provide ongoing periodic reporting.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	30 th September 2024
23	Implementation of recommendations from the Audit Wales review of the Council's Cyber Security arrangements.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation/ Infrastructure	1 st January 2024	31 st March 2025
24	Follow up actions relating to Information Risk are identified annually in the Annual Information Risk Report, reported to Scrutiny.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate People, Policy & Transformation	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
25	To resolve the internal audit medium to long term arrangements to strengthen resilience of the service.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
26	To improve the monitoring and follow up of recommendations from Internal Audit reviews.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
27	Review quality of Planning Performance data submitted to Welsh Government	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Environment & Sustainability Regeneration and Economic Development	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
28	Ongoing information management policy refresh to ensure consistency and currency,	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and	Transformation & Corporate	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025

Action No.	Issue / Action	Principle	Lead Directorate / Service Area	Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date
	reviewed in the Annual Information Risk Report.	strong public financial management.	People, Policy & Transformation		
29	Increase of Finance capacity to support of the Council's Transformation Programme to ensure that planned changes are subject to adequate financial review and challenge.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st March 2025
30	Introduction of the new finance system and the improved reporting and visibility of financial information, giving senior managers greater insights to support decision making.	F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.	Transformation & Corporate Finance	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
31	Review Planning Committee Protocol to clarify speaking and voting rights of committee members and ensure this is reflected within the Council Constitution	G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting	Environment & Sustainability Regeneration and Economic Development	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024
32	Further to the Auditor General's letter to all Chief Executive's in Wales on the presentation of regulatory reports to democratic committees, the Council will take the opportunity to review the current processes and where necessary improve any existing arrangements.	G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.	Transformation & Corporate Law & Standards People, Policy & Transformation	1 st April 2024	31 st December 2024