

To: Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

On: 18 March 2024

Report by: Chief Executive

**Heading: Annual Review of Compliance with the Local Code of Corporate
Governance 2023**

1. Summary

1.1. Corporate governance is the name given to the system by which Councils direct and control their functions. It is about ensuring that Councils do the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

1.2. *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework*, which was refreshed in 2016 by CIPFA in association with Solace, is the framework which sets the standard for local authority governance in the UK and has been adopted by Renfrewshire Council as the Code of Corporate Governance. The Council formally reviews its compliance with the Code every year and this report provides evidence of that compliance. Each year, the Chief Auditor also provides a report to this Board detailing Internal Audit's assessment of the Council's internal control environment and any exposure to risk.

1.3. These annual reviews support the Council in continuous improvement; by considering the evidence of compliance, we can respond to organisational learning and use that to further strengthen our approach.

1.4. Appendix 1 provides a list of the seven overarching principles and sub-principles against which compliance is measured. Appendix 2 provides a detailed description of the evidential documents which demonstrate continued compliance, and notes which principles they relate too.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board note:
- the Council's compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance;
 - note the evidence for compliance set out in Appendix 2;
 - note that compliance with the code is also subject to planned internal audit activity.
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3. Background

- 3.1 CIPFA published the *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework* in 2007 to set the standard for local authority governance in the UK. It reviewed and published a revised edition in 2016 to ensure it remained 'fit for purpose'. The updated code places greater emphasis on relationships and behaviours between Elected Members and senior management; performance reporting; and Council and service level plans. Renfrewshire Council has adopted this as its own Code of Corporate Governance, and reviews compliance on an annual basis.
- 3.2 The Code of Corporate Governance covers the seven core principles which bring together the main elements of Council business. These are:
1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
 3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
 4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
 5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
 6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
 7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 3.3 The sub-principles which sit beneath these are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.4 A summary of the evidence which demonstrates compliance is provided in Section 4 of this report. A detailed list of documents and processes presented as evidence is included in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The framework is reviewed by Internal Audit, who assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the code and the extent to which the Council has complied with it, with findings reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board.

4. **Compliance with the Code in 2023**

- 4.1 Each of the seven principles is broken down into sub-sections (see Appendix 1), and these are further broken down to cover specific functions. This section of the report will consider compliance levels against each of the seven principles. More detailed descriptions of the evidence for compliance are given in Appendix 2.

Principle 1: Integrity, ethical values and respecting the rule of law

- 4.2 The first of the seven principles has three sub-sections: behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- 4.3 Codes of Conduct are in place for elected members and for employees, as well as a protocol for the relationships between political groups, elected members and officers. Elected members agree to adhere to the code of conduct when they formally accept office, and staff agree adherence on commencing employment with Renfrewshire Council. Elected members are required to update their register of interests every six months, and to declare any interests appropriately at meetings. Chief Officers are required to provide a register of interests on an annual basis.
- 4.4 There are policies and procedures in place to provide a framework by which business is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. These range from standing orders for contracts and the scheme of delegation to recruitment policies and financial regulations. Policy board reports are available to the public, except where exempted within the parameters of the law.
- 4.5 The Council expects staff and elected members to demonstrate behaviours which are in line with the Council's Values – "We are fair", "We are helpful", "We are great collaborators", "We value learning".

PRINCIPLE 2: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- 4.6 The second principle has three sub-sections: openness; engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders; and engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users.
- 4.7 As noted above in 4.4, the Council publishes all board papers and maintains an archive online, so that interested parties can access them. The Council Plan, and the service plans which sit below it, are clear expressions of the Council's priorities and strategic direction, and progress in achieving this is reported regularly.
- 4.8 The council's marketing and communication service ensures the council's policies and decisions made by Council Boards are clearly explained and communicated locally through several communication channels. The Council has developed a network of local partners and community groups who cascade Council information through their own channels, increasing the reach of key messages.

- 4.9 The Council uses a range of communication channels and consultation mechanisms to engage with stakeholders. These include public campaigns, the council website, social media channels and participatory budgeting campaigns such as You Decide and the work of local partnerships. Targeted consultation is undertaken in relation to specific projects and initiatives, for example tenant consultations on rent, or housing regeneration consultations. There has also been specific work undertaken with the community in Dargavel in relation to education provision, and the statutory consultation on the catchment for the new school is currently underway.

PRINCIPLE 3: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

- 4.9 There are two sub-sections to principle 3: defining outcomes and sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 4.10 The Council's approach to service and strategic planning ensures a golden thread linking back service activity to the strategic priorities of the Council and to the Community Plan. A key element is a focus on what the intended outcome of activity is, framed in terms of the impact on citizens. As a five-year plan, the Council Plan allows for a longer-term view whilst retaining flexibility to adjust to changes in circumstances (as was demonstrated during the pandemic).
- 4.11 The Council Plan was influenced by a strategic needs assessment carried out in 2022 and a new community impact assessment will be undertaken in 2024 and will help the Council evaluate the priorities of the current Council Plan and refocus if required.

PRINCIPLE 4: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- 4.12 Principle 4 has three sub-sections: determining interventions; planning interventions; and optimising achievement of intended outcomes.
- 4.13 Decision-making processes allow for consideration of options and risks, and build in feedback from stakeholders including citizens, staff, elected members and partners. This is evidenced in informal and formal engagement processes, in the work of Local Partnerships and in reports to Boards and Council.
- 4.14 Paragraph 4.10 outlines the planning approach in Renfrewshire, and this is one way in which the Council can demonstrate compliance with principles relating to strategic and service-level planning. That approach includes a performance framework aligned to Council Plan themes. Partnership arrangements, including those within the Community Planning framework, also serve as demonstrations of how interventions are determined and planned. The Council's financial planning and monitoring framework ensures that resources are aligned with priorities and are managed appropriately and sustainably.

PRINCIPLE 5: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

- 4.15 There are two sub-sections within this principle: developing the entity's capacity and developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals.
- 4.16 Monitoring of plans and performance are only one way in which the Council tracks and ensures effectiveness. Benchmarking provides a useful means of identifying good practice in other councils, and partnership working can allow council services to find added value through collaboration.
- 4.17 As well as the formal protocols and codes noted in 4.3, a shared understanding of roles and priorities is fostered through regular meetings between senior managers and elected members, and through the Cross-Party Sounding Board and Cross-Party Governance Group. Briefings are also provided to elected members prior to policy boards and as require on ad-hoc issues at an authority and ward level.
- 4.18 The capabilities of individuals are developed through formal training, whether self-directed through platforms such as iLearn or the Improvement Service's CPD framework for elected members, and through an annual programme of briefings and seminars. A specific programme of leadership development is being rolled out during 2024. The Council also ensures arrangements are in place to support wellbeing, including access to occupational health, mentoring opportunities, flexible working and access to employee benefits.

PRINCIPLE 6: Managing risks and performance through robust internal controls and strong public financial management

- 4.19 The sixth principle has five sub-sections: managing risk; managing performance; robust internal control; managing data; and strong public financial management.
- 4.20 The Council has an overarching risk management policy and strategy which sets the approach, and corporate and strategic risk registers which are reviewed regularly and are subject to scrutiny by senior managers and elected members. A Corporate Risk Management Group ensures there is consistency across all services and provides a mechanism for sharing learning and good practice. Programme Boards exist for major programmes such as City Deal, Learning Estate Investment and the Cultural Infrastructure Programme, and it is through those mechanisms that programme risk is assessed, monitored and mitigated. This approach to risk management is also built in to the approach of the Council's Programme Management Unit.
- 4.22 The Independent Review on Dargavel Primary School identified specific issues relating to the risk management of that capital project, and action has been undertaken to provide additional assurance on the issues raised. The Council has noted, [in a paper to Council in June 2023](#), that this was not typical of the risk management of capital projects; examples such as AMIDS demonstrate how risk is typically dealt with in large scale programmes.
- 4.23 Performance management and monitoring is a key feature of service and strategic

planning, and is one of the ways that services demonstrate delivery and impact. The Council currently uses Pentana as its main tool for collating performance data. Comparative performance through the LGBF is reported to Board and also made available on the Council's website in the form of interactive dashboards alongside case studies. Service level performance information is also subject to regular scrutiny by the Corporate Management Team and at the relevant Policy Boards.

- 4.24 There are robust financial regulations in place, and budgetary positions and financial outlooks are regularly provided to elected members. Internal Audit undertakes several in-depth audits every year, and specific protocols are in place to deal with any issues arising in relation to potential fraud.
- 4.25 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board provides a further level of control and scrutiny which is independent of the administration. The Board can direct officers to undertake reviews on particular issues and is the body that considers the Council's Annual Audit Report, and oversees the management of risk. In the 2023 Best Value Report, the Council's Auditors "recommended that the Council evaluates of the effectiveness of the Audit, Scrutiny and Risk Board against CIPFA good practice guidelines." This has been undertaken and a members development session has taken place. Recommendations will be presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in March 2024.
- 4.26 A robust corporate approach ensures that information governance policy and processes are rigorous, and there is a regular programme of work which is focused on continuous improvement in relation to data standards, data sharing, and on using data effectively.
- 4.27 All senior officers in the Council undertook governance training in 2023/24, which provided information on updated protocols and a refresher on good governance practice.

PRINCIPLE 7: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

- 4.28 There are three sub-sections to principle seven: implementing good practice in transparency; implementing good practices in reporting; assurance and effective accountability.
- 4.29 As well as publishing reports to Policy Boards, financial strategies, annual accounts and other information of interest to stakeholders, the Council produces an annual Public Performance Report which makes use of maps, data, images and video to tell the story of how the Council is performing. Performance updates on the Council Plan, Community Plan and Service Improvement Plans are also available on the Council's website.
- 4.30 Reports such as this, the annual financial statements and the reports to Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board all seek to highlight how the Council operates and what it delivers, and to provide the transparency and assurance which is at the core of the

Nolan principles.

5. Reviews of governance relating to Dargavel Primary School

- 5.1 In late 2022, Renfrewshire commissioned an independent review into the delivery of Dargavel Primary School. The review author made a number of recommendations, three of which have direct relevance to compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance. These relate to Principles 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.2, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.
- 5.2 Recommendation 5 related to corporate working and organisational culture. It concluded that a change programme focused on corporate working, personal responsibility, and organisational culture and values was required to provide clarity on lines of accountability and ensure space for constructive challenge. The report noted the significant improvements to corporate working in recent years. A leadership development programme for the Council's senior managers was already being progressed when the review findings were published, and this continues to be rolled out. In light of the recommendation from the review, specific additional content on effective corporate working has been included.
- 5.3 Recommendation 6 relates to how risk is identified and managed, noting that the specific risk management arrangements for that project were insufficient. In its response to the recommendations, the Council has noted that this was not usual practice, and that robust risk management arrangements have long been, and continue to be, the standard. However, to provide additional assurance in relation to project-specific risk, additional development work with a focus on commercial risks has been included in the learning programme for senior managers noted above.
- 5.4 Recommendation 8 notes that issues relating to Dargavel Primary School have damaged public confidence in Renfrewshire Council and stresses the importance of open and transparent dialogue with that community. Regular two-way communication and engagement has been underway with the community since October 2022. The impact of this will be assessed in the coming months and reported to the Accounts Commission.
- 5.5 Since the review was completed, the Accounts Commission have published their Section 102 report and advised that there are some issues which require further scrutiny from the Controller of Audit in the coming months.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none, though the report makes reference to financial governance matters.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none, though the report makes reference to a number of HR policies and procedures.

3. **Community/Council Planning** – none. The report makes reference to engagement mechanisms with a range of community stakeholders.
4. **Legal** – The Council must meet legal requirements in how it operates and this report details the way in which it can demonstrate good governance.
5. **Property/Assets** – none.
6. **Information Technology** – none
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - This report is for noting only and there are no recommendations which would need assessed in terms of their impact on equality groups or human rights.
8. **Health and Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – none, though the report provides information on Council Standing Orders.
10. **Risk** - The Council must comply with CIPFA's Local Code of Corporate Governance. There is a risk of legal consequences and reputational damage if there is non-compliance.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none.
13. **Climate** – none.

List of Background Papers

None

Appendix 1: Principles of Good Governance in Local Government

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	
1.1 Behaving with integrity	
1.1.1	Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation
1.1.2	Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)
1.1.3	Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions.
1.1.4	Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.
1.2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	
1.2.1	Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance.
1.2.2	Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation.
1.2.3	Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.
1.2.4	Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the organisation.
1.3 Respecting the rule of law	
1.3.1	Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.
1.3.2	Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
1.3.3	Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.
1.3.4	Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.
1.3.5	Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.
2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	
2.1 Openness	
2.1.1	Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness.
2.1.2	Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided.
2.1.3	Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.

2.1.4	Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions / courses of action.
2.2 Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	
2.2.1	Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.
2.2.2	Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.
2.2.3	Ensuring that partnerships are based on: trust; a shared commitment to change; a culture that promotes and accepts challenge amongst partners; and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.
2.3 Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively.	
2.3.1	Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievements of intended outcomes.
2.3.2	Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.
2.3.3	Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experience of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.
2.3.4	Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.
2.3.5	Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.
2.3.6	Taking account of the interests of future generations of taxpayers and service users.
3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	
3.1 Defining outcomes	
3.1.1.	Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.
3.1.2	Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer.
3.1.3	Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.
3.1.4	Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes.
3.1.5	Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.
3.2 Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	
3.2.1	Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision.
3.2.2	Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.

3.2.3	Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs.
3.2.4	Ensuring fair access to services.
4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes	
4.1 Determining interventions	
4.1.1	Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided.
4.1.2	Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.
4.2 Planning interventions	
4.2.1	Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets.
4.2.2	Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.
4.2.3	Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks.
4.2.4	Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances.
4.2.5	Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured.
4.2.6	Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.
4.2.7	Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium-term financial plan.
4.2.8	Informing medium and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.
4.3 Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	
4.3.1	Ensuring the medium-term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.
4.3.2	Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.
4.3.3	Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.
4.3.4	Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning.
5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it	
5.1 Developing the entity's capacity	

5.1.1	Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness.
5.1.2	Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.
5.1.3	Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.
5.1.4	Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.
5.2 Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals	
5.2.1	Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.
5.2.2	Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decisions making of the governing body.
5.2.3	Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure, whereby the chief executive leads the authority in implementing the strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority.
5.2.4	Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by: ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged; ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis; ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from both internal and external governance weaknesses.
5.2.5	Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.
5.2.6	Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.
5.2.7	Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs.
5.2.8	Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.
6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	
6.1 Managing risk	
6.1.1	Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making.
6.1.2	Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.
6.1.3	Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.

6.2 Managing performance	
6.2.1	Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post-implementation review.
6.2.2	Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.
6.2.3	Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible; OR, for a committee system, encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making
6.2.4	Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.
6.2.5	Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post-implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).
6.3 Robust internal control	
6.3.1	Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives.
6.3.2	Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis.
6.3.3	Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place.
6.3.4	Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.
6.3.5	Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment, and that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.
6.4 Managing data	
6.4.1	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data
6.4.2	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.
6.4.3	Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring.
6.5 Strong public financial management	
6.5.1	Ensuring financial management supports both long-term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.
6.5.2	Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.
7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability	
7.1 Implementing good practice in transparency	
7.1.1	Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.

7.1.2	Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demand and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.
7.2 Implementing good practices in reporting	
7.2.1	Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources.
7.2.2	Ensuring members and senior management own the results.
7.2.3	Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (annual governance statement)
7.2.4	Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.
7.2.5	Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations.
7.3 Assurance and effective accountability	
7.3.1	Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.
7.3.2	Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon.
7.3.3	Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.
7.3.4	Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.
7.3.5	Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

Appendix 2: Description of Evidence for Compliance

Evidence	Description	Principles
Code of Conduct for Employees	<p>The various codes of conduct determine how officers and members work within partnerships, and the shared values that they will demonstrate.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct for Employees is available on the intranet and is also issued to new employees when they join Renfrewshire Council. The council's disciplinary procedures are in place to deal with any alleged misconduct.</p>	<p>1.1.1 1.1.3 1.1.4</p>
Code of Conduct for Elected Members	<p>The Councillors' Code, which was introduced by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, sets out a protocol for relations between Councillors and employees. All Elected Members, following their election in May 2022, have signed their declaration of acceptance of office whereby they undertook to meet the requirements of the Councillors' code issued under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 in the performance of their functions as a Councillor. The Code of Conduct was updated by the Scottish Government in December 2021 and a paper outlining this was approved at Council in December 2021.</p> <p>Any alleged contraventions of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 would be referred for investigation to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life. And thereafter for consideration by the Standards Commission appointed by Scottish Ministers. Where a hearing involving a member of Renfrewshire Council has taken place, the outcome of this is reported to the Council. Since August 2009 all Council and Board agendas include an item in relation to declarations of interest.</p> <p>Briefings for Elected Members on their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct for Councillors are held regularly every year, conducted by the Head of Corporate Governance. The induction programme for members elected in 2022 included sessions on the roles and responsibilities of officers and members.</p> <p>The Council's protocol for relationships between political groups, Elected Members and officers sets out the rights and responsibilities of Councillors and political groups in the course of conducting Council business and provide good practice guidelines in relation to the multi-member ward issues.</p>	<p>1.1.1 1.1.2 1.1.3 1.1.4 1.2.1 1.2.2 5.2.1</p>

	Councillors are advised of and can attend sessions delivered by the Standards Commission.	
Protocol for Relationships between Political Groups, Elected Members and Officers	<p>The Council's elected member and inter-party protocols and protocol for member/officer relations were reviewed and combined into one composite protocol which was approved by the Finance and Resources Policy Board on 12th November 2014. An updated version was approved by Council on 29 February 2024.</p> <p>Any alleged contraventions of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 would be referred for investigation to the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life. And thereafter for consideration by the Standards Commission appointed by Scottish Ministers. Where a hearing involving a member of Renfrewshire Council has taken place, the outcome of this is reported to the Council. Since August 2009 all Council and Board agendas include an item in relation to declarations of interest.</p>	<p>1.1.1 1.1.2 1.2.1 5.2.1</p>
Code of Corporate Governance	The Council complies with this requirement through its adoption of the CIPFA Code of Corporate Governance and its annual reporting of compliance with the code.	<p>1.1.1 6.3.4</p>
Cross-Party Governance Group	The Cross-Party Working Group was established in 2023 and comprises one member from each of the four political parties and one member to represent the Independents. The agenda is set by the group members and makes recommendations where required. A report on the activities of the group was considered at Council on 29 February 2024.	<p>1.1.1 2.2.1 5.2.1</p>
Scheme of delegated functions	The Council's scheme of delegation ensures that decisions are made at the lowest or most local level consistent with the nature of the issues involved, with the exception of those powers which cannot be delegated or have been reserved to the Council. These functions have been delegated to Boards and committees, the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service and other officers, including through statutory appointments of officers. The Scheme is changed to reflect any restructuring of Council services and transfer of functions between services. The Scheme was updated in February 2024.	<p>1.1.1 1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.4 2.1.2 5.2.2</p>
Our Values	<p>The Council's new values were launched in 2020. These are continually embedded across the organisation through our policies and our training and development programmes.</p> <p>Specific Training on Our Values is available on the council's iLearn platform.</p>	<p>1.1.3 1.2.2 2.1.1</p>

Council Plan	<p>The Council Plan sets out the strategic priorities for the organisation. The current plan for 2022-2027 was approved by Council in September 2022 and the accompanying performance scorecard was approved by Leadership Board in November 2022. Progress on delivering on the priorities in the Council Plan is reported to the Leadership Board on a six-monthly basis.</p> <p>The Council Plan has five strategic outcomes with an additional overarching aim to improve outcomes for children and families. Services align their own service planning to these outcomes, providing clear linkages between operational activities and strategic goals.</p>	<p>1.1.3 2.1.1 3.1.1 3.1.2 3.1.3 4.2.4</p>
Community Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan)	<p>Renfrewshire's Community Plan acts as the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and was refreshed in 2022.</p> <p>It is informed by a strategic needs assessment and by findings from consultations undertaken with our communities. It sets out a clear vision for partnerships and for Renfrewshire and its people, as well as the key areas of priority and actions to be undertaken.</p> <p>Six monthly updates on progress with the Community Plan are reported to the Leadership Board; the most recent report was approved in February 2024.</p>	<p>1.1.3 2.1.1 2.2.2 3.1.2 5.1.3</p>
Senior Officers' Register of Interests	<p>The Council has a register of interests for Senior Officers. Information contained on the register is subject to Freedom of Information legislation. Chief Officers are contacted on an annual basis to update the register.</p> <p>Information from the register of senior officers' interests was published for the first time in October 2016 on the Council's website. Renfrewshire was the first Council in Scotland to publish information on the interests of its senior officers online.</p>	<p>1.1.4 1.2.1</p>
Whistleblowing policy	<p>The organisation recently revised its Whistleblowing Policy and it was approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board on 9 February 2023. It provides a mechanism for staff to raise concerns about any potential malpractice, illegality, wrongdoing or serious failures of standard of work.</p>	<p>1.1.4</p>
Complaints Handling Procedure	<p>The Council regularly reviews its complaints handling procedures to ensure they reflect the latest guidance from the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).</p>	<p>1.1.4 6.2.4</p>

	<p>An Annual Complaints Report is presented to each year to the Audit Risk and Scrutiny Board. This includes a breakdown on number of complaints, how timeously we have responded to complainants and improvements made to complaints handling.</p> <p>Information on how the Council is performing in relation to complaints handling is reported to the Corporate Management Team quarterly.</p>	
Elected Member Register of Interests	<p>Councillors hold public office under the law and must observe the rules of conduct stemming from the law, the Code of Conduct for Councillors and any guidance from the Standards Commission and the rules, standing orders and regulations of the Council. In addition, the Council has developed an inter-party protocol which highlights that Political Groups have the responsibility not to require individual Councillors to vote on party lines in respect of decisions where group decision-making would be unlawful, contrary to the Councillors' Code of Conduct or against any Council approved guidance; in particular on planning applications, specific regulatory matters, employment issues affecting individuals, all matters coming before the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board or any matter which requires to be determined on the basis of evidence given to or the findings of a forum on which Councillors serve.</p> <p>Members are required to register their interests in terms of the Code of Conduct for Councillors' and declare these interests at meetings. Declarations of interest are minuted and are available for public view on each member's online profile page on the website. Elected Members are formally asked to regularly update their register of interests every six months.</p>	<p>1.1.4 1.2.1</p>
Provision of ethical awareness training	<p>The elected member induction programme includes a session which covers the code of conduct, protocols, roles and responsibilities, and the role of the Standards Commission. Elected members can also access resources directly from the Standards Commission.</p>	1.2.2
Appraisal processes	<p>A People, Performance and Talent Policy, Guidance and Competency Frameworks for all levels is available across the Council. This is currently under review to take account of the new ways of working. An interim 2024 Appraisal Process is being adopted for our Chief Officers whilst this review is ongoing.</p> <p>All HR processes are currently under review and new policies are being brought forward regularly.</p>	<p>1.2.3 5.2.7</p>

Recruitment	<p>The Council has robust recruitment procedures in place to ensure the fair selection of candidates. There is an appointment panel for Chief Officer level appointments. The Council's recruitment and selection processes are designed in accordance with best practice principles, legislation and COSLA recruitment and selection guidance. A revised Recruitment Policy was approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in November 2022.</p> <p>Work is underway on a Workforce Planning Strategy which will support staff retention as well as recruitment.</p>	1.2.3
Standing Orders relating to contracts	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to have standing orders in place relating to contracts, the main purpose of which is to provide open and transparent procedures for tenderers; to achieve value for money for the Council; and to provide guidelines for officers. These standing orders are reviewed regularly as a matter of good practice; the most recent version took effect on 1 January 2024.</p> <p>Organisations bidding for Renfrewshire Council contracts are required to complete a questionnaire response as a self-declaration that they have not breached any of the mandatory and discretionary exclusion grounds set out in the Procurement Regulations. Bidders are also required to complete and submit an Equalities Questionnaire, setting out their Equalities policies and to confirm that they fully comply with their statutory duties under the Equalities Act 2010. To help support small businesses, bidders must also sign an undertaking to pay their sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice.</p> <p>To protect the workforce, bidders are required to respond to a number of scored and evaluated questions which assess the organisations approach to Fair Work practices with consideration given to the Fair Work First criteria. Construction Contracts include a statement in relation to the procurement of construction contracts which links directly to the Council's Construction Charter.</p> <p>All of these measures seek to ensure that the appointed contractor is a fit and proper organisation, that their workforce is protected and that the use of exploitative labour is forbidden.</p>	1.2.3 1.2.4 1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.4

Procedural Standing Orders	<p>The Council's Procedural Standing Orders govern the conduct of meetings of the Council and its Boards. The Standing Orders provide for such matters including voting, motions and amendments and the power of the Provost/Chair.</p>	<p>1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.4</p>
<p>Policy Board Reports</p>	<p>Reports to the Council and all Board meetings provide members with sufficient information on which they are able to take reasoned decisions and provide clear recommendations. Decisions made during meetings are recorded in the minutes. Report templates include mandatory sections where the implications of reports must be noted. Pre-agenda meetings are held with Convenors and Depute Convenors at which any issues can be addressed prior to the finalised agenda being issued.</p> <p>In addition, each of the Council Boards has a dedicated solicitor who reviews reports in order that the vires of proposed actions can be checked. Each report has a section on legal implications. The frontispieces to reports require that community planning partners are consulted in the preparation of reports where appropriate and reports must outline community/ Council plan implications.</p>	<p>1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.4 2.1.3 3.2.2 4.1.1 6.2.2</p>
<p>Statutory Officers Role</p>	<p>The Council has nominated officers fulfilling statutory roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Paid Service • Chief Finance Officer (CFO) (proper officer in terms of s95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973) • Monitoring Officer (1.3.4) • Senior Information Risk Owner • Chief Social Work Officer • Data Protection Officer (6.4.1) • Chief Planning Officer <p>The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service.</p> <p>The Director of Finance is both the CFO and the SIRO.</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Governance acts as Monitoring Officer in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and as detailed in the job description, is responsible for advising the Council on the legality of its decisions and providing guidance to Councillors and officers on the Council's powers.</p>	<p>1.3.1 1.3.4 6.4.1</p>

	<p>The Head of Child Care and Criminal Justice is the Chief Social Work Officer, and fulfils that role for the Council and for Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership.</p> <p>The Managing Solicitor (DPO) is the statutory Data Protection Officer whose remit includes overseeing the Council's implementation of GDPR, other data protection laws and the relevant Council policies and to ensure compliance with those.</p>	
Promotion of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	The Council has promoted awareness of the powers and potential use of the Community Empowerment Act through engagement with statutory and non-statutory community organisations and with third sector partners. The Council initially published details of the legal and procedural framework in relation to Community Asset Transfer in February 2017 and revised the policy and procedures in 2022. The Sustainable Communities Fund supports local people to develop sustainable projects which improve community collaboration, health and wellbeing, economic development and environmental action.	1.3.3
Renfrewshire Forum for Empowering Communities	The Renfrewshire Forum for Empowering Communities is part of the local Community Planning structure. It is run by Engage Renfrewshire, the local Third Sector Interface organisation. Membership is drawn from third sector groups and community councils, as well as from local public sector bodies. The Forum is intended to act as a community sounding board for the Community Planning Partnership. In 2023, issues discussed at the Forum included community transport, Local Partnership grant awards, the Fairer Renfrewshire programme and The Promise.	2.1.4 2.3.3 4.2.2
Community Planning Arrangements	Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership includes a range of organisations working in Renfrewshire— Renfrewshire Council; Police Scotland; the NHS; Scottish Fire and Rescue, West College Scotland, University of West of Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, One Ren, the Third Sector Interface called Engage Renfrewshire, Skills Development Scotland, Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the Department of Work and Pensions. The Partnership is led by an Executive Group.	2.2.1 2.2.2 2.2.3
Petitions Board	The Petitions Board provides an opportunity for individual members of the public to raise issues of concern with the Council, either as individuals or on behalf of an organisation.	2.3.1 4.1.2

	<p>The Council introduced a public petitions procedure in 2007 which strengthens the connection between the Council and the community to raise issues of concern in relation to services provided by the Council or other bodies such as the police and health board, recognising that the Council has limited influence over other bodies. Details of petitions received and their outcomes are included in the annual report to the Board and on the Council's website.</p> <p>Petitions previously were considered by the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board but as of June 2017, a separate Petitions Board has been established to consider petitions only. The Board met once in 2023, to consider a petition on parking.</p>	
Local Partnerships	<p>Renfrewshire has seven Local Partnerships, created in 2019 to replace the previous Local Area Committee structure. It was intended to review arrangements after twelve months but this was delayed due to the pandemic and a subsequent need to prioritise other work. The review is now complete and recommendations were approved by the Leadership Board in February 2024. A campaign to relaunch the Local Partnerships will now commence, and updated guidance for the Partnerships has been published.</p> <p>The business-as-usual work of the Local Partnerships continues whilst the review is ongoing.</p>	2.3.3
Community engagement mechanisms	<p>Formal mechanisms, such including the Community Planning Partnership's Forum for Empowering Communities, are one way in which community groups can contribute to local priority setting. The Renfrewshire Climate Panel and the Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience panel have more focused remits and allow local residents with particular interests and/or experiences to inform decision-making.</p> <p>The approaches to participatory budgeting detailed elsewhere in this report are an opportunity for individuals to directly influence spend in their community, and have a wider reach than the more formal groups noted above.</p> <p>The Council also undertakes public consultations and has established a Customer Feedback group, which is open to any resident to join.</p>	2.3.5
Policy Board Implications	<p>All policy board papers have an implications section requiring the report author to detail implications under these headings: Financial, HR and Organisational</p>	2.2.1 3.2.1

	Development, Community/Council Planning, Legal, Property/Assets, ICT, Equality and Human Rights, Health and Safety, Procurement, Risk, Privacy Impact, COSLA Position, and Climate. Report authors should use this section to note impacts arising from the recommendations of the report.	
Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero	<p>Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero was approved by elected members in 2022 and sets out how the Council intends to become a net zero organisation and how it will work in partnership with communities, businesses and other organisations to make Renfrewshire as a whole net zero.</p> <p>Regular two-way engagement on the strategy and support for decision making comes from the Renfrewshire Climate Panel, recruited from the local community.</p>	<p>2.3.3 2.3.4 2.3.6</p>
Service Improvement Plans	Each service prepares annual service plans which set out priority actions for the forthcoming three-year period, and provide performance measures and actions to demonstrate improved outcomes. These plans align to the Council Plan. Plans are approved by the relevant Policy Board and those boards receive updates on progress twice a year.	<p>3.1.1 3.1.2 3.1.3 3.1.5 4.2.1 4.2.5 4.3.4 6.2.1 6.2.4 6.4.3</p>
Social Renewal Plan	As part of the pandemic response, the Council undertook a community impact assessment and developed a Social Renewal Plan , focused on working with partners to improve wellbeing and tackle inequalities. This now forms the basis of the work of the Fairer Renfrewshire programme. The plan reflected the significant shift in priorities from early 2020 and the importance of being able to adapt to changing circumstances.	<p>3.1.1 3.1.2 3.1.5 4.2.4 4.3.4 5.1.3</p>
Capital Programme/Capital Investment Strategy	The Council's capital spending plans are policy-led and therefore reflect the main strategic intent of the Council and comply with the Prudential Framework for Capital Investment. Full Council approves the five-year rolling programme as part of the annual revenue and capital budget-setting process. Updates on the progress of capital investment plans are reported on a routine basis to each Policy Board.	3.2.1
Annual Governance Statement	The Council complies with this requirement through its Annual Governance statement which details the organisation's governance arrangements. This is in	<p>6.3.4 7.2.3</p>

	<p>line with national guidance and is updated on an annual basis. The statement is published in the Council's Annual Accounts and submitted to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board, most recently in November 2023.</p> <p>Any key risks identified through the new Business as Usual Risk Assessment process, which is undertaken by the Directors and Heads of Service, would be reflected in the governance statement.</p>	<p>7.2.4 7.3.4</p>
Access to services	<p>The Council aims to make its services accessible to all, and to make reasonable adjustments as necessary to ensure all residents have fair access.</p> <p>All Council documents can be provided in differing formats and languages in order to meet any communication needs.</p> <p>The pandemic required a rapid transition to much greater digital service provision, and an increasing number of requests for council services can be made online, making it easier for many to access services and at a time that suits them. For those who prefer face-to-face or telephone contact, these options are still available.</p> <p>The Council has contracts with local independent advocacy groups who can support people with specific needs to access services.</p> <p>The new Customer Strategy has used over 1300 customer survey responses to provide information on how people currently access services and how they would like to access them.</p> <p>New approaches to service delivery can also support greater accessibility. A recent example is the development of The Circle Recovery Hub which filled a gap in local provision and takes a more inclusive and accessible approach to supporting people who previously used alcohol and drugs.</p>	3.2.4
Accountability and partnership arrangements –	<p>Arrangements are in place between Renfrewshire Council and its Community Planning partners, the IJB and OneRen.</p>	7.3.5

Integration Joint Board and OneRen	<p>Governance arrangements, such as systems for managing, monitoring and scrutinising the IJB's business and finances have been developed. Effective arrangements are in place for sharing information between partners that can lead to improving how services are provided, such as the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>The Head of Policy and Partnerships is the One Ren Monitoring Officer and undertakes quarterly meetings to review performance of OneRen (formerly Renfrewshire Leisure). In addition, six-monthly updates and an Annual Business Plan is reported to and agreed by the Leadership Board.</p>	
Self-assessment	<p>A new approach to corporate self-assessment was undertaken in 2023. Sessions took place initially with the Corporate Management Team before being rolled out to wider senior management through the Our Leaders Forum at the end of 2023.</p> <p>An action plan addressing key priorities arising from the CMT exercise has been developed. CMT will continue to receive regular updates on this and options are being considered for how to involve wider staff groups in further prioritisation and monitoring.</p>	7.3.4
Minutes of Agreement	<p>Minutes of Agreement set out the rights, duties, powers, liabilities and obligations of parties to the Agreement e.g. the Council and partner organisations. Appointments of members to outside bodies are not taken up until the Director of Finance and Resources confirms that the organisation has appropriate insurance policies in place.</p>	4.2.3
Benchmarking / peer review	<p>Services across the Council are involved in both formal and informal benchmarking arrangements through for example, the Association for Public Sector Excellence and the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (SHBVN) annual benchmarking process.</p> <p>All 32 Scottish local authorities use the Local Government Benchmarking Framework as a means of peer review, and to contribute to their Statutory Performance reporting obligations. The Council's performance in terms of Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators is reported to and reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board each year. This includes information on service levels, service costs and customer satisfaction.</p>	4.2.6 5.1.2 7.3.3
Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board	<p>The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board functions as the Council's audit committee and has an overview of the internal audit role to ensure that resources are being targeted effectively. The Council has recently committed to undertake a review of</p>	5.1.1 5.2.7 6.2.3

	<p>the effectiveness of the Board against the CIPFA Good Practice Guidance for Audit Committees.</p> <p>The Board considers summaries and risks identified from the work of internal audit and considers the Chief Auditors annual opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's governance, internal control and management of risk. Recommendations made by external audit and/or national external audit reports along with management's response and/or Renfrewshire Council's position are reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board. The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board's remit includes audit scrutiny, monitoring and review of service delivery, performance, policies and practice, community leadership through monitoring of other public bodies, and standards and ethics.</p> <p>In terms of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Council's Chief Auditor submits quarterly reports on internal audit performance and an annual report to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on the activities of internal audit to demonstrate performance and containing a view on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. Again, in terms of the above standards, regular reports are submitted to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in relation to the findings of the Council's internal and external auditors which details the main issues arising.</p> <p>The Council's performance in terms of Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators is reported to and reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board each year. This includes information on service levels, service costs and customer satisfaction. In addition, the Annual Complaints Report is presented to Board annually. This includes a breakdown on number of complaints, how timeously we have responded to complainants and improvements made to complaints handling.</p> <p>The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board prepares an annual programme, including areas for specific review. Members suggesting an area for review must identify the purpose and objectives of the review and the intended outcome. The Board takes a common sense approach to reviewing decisions and policies and the process provides the opportunity for Elected Members to examine the various functions of the Council, to ask questions on how decisions have been made, to consider whether service improvements can be put in place and makes recommendations as appropriate. For each review, the Chief Executive appoints a lead officer to</p>	<p>6.2.4 6.3.1 6.3.5 6.4.3 7.2.1 7.3.1 7.3.2</p>
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	assist members of the Board to identify potential issues and questions to be asked of witnesses. Following each review, a report is prepared by the lead officers for approval by the Board and thereafter the Council. If appropriate, minority of dissenting views are recorded in the minutes of the meeting.	
Procurement – delivering sustainability and social value	<p>Section 9 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 places a duty on public sector contracting authorities to consider how their procurement activities can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. improve the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the authority's area, ii. facilitate the involvement of small and medium enterprises, third sector bodies and supported businesses in the process, and iii. promote innovation <p>In accordance with the requirements of the Act, the Council has set out how we will ensure delivery of these ambitions in our Procurement Strategy, which covers the period 2023 to 2025. It sets out our commitment to balance cost, value, the delivery of social value, the delivery of supply chain and supplier sustainability, and the need to tackle climate change.</p> <p>Procurement and Economic Development are working jointly to deliver support to local suppliers as part of our Community Wealth Building approach. Our procurement activity also delivers community benefits within contracts; 308 identified benefits were delivered in 2022/23, including 24 new jobs, 19 new apprenticeships and 81 new qualifications. Relevant tenders are evaluated according to the Fair Work criteria.</p> <p>The strategy also notes the key enabling role of procurement in working towards a Net Zero Renfrewshire by 2030.</p>	2.3.6 4.3.4
Corporate Asset Register	The Council maintains a Corporate Asset Register and this is regularly reviewed. The Council is currently undertaking a Strategic Property Review.	5.1.1
Community Asset Transfer Policy	The Council's Community Asset Transfer was revised in 2022. The policy, guidance and documents relating to asset transfers can all be found on the Council's website.	5.1.1

Meetings between Chief Executive and senior elected members	The Chief Executive holds weekly meetings with the Leader and regular meetings with opposition leaders.	5.2.1
Cross Party Sounding Board	The Council at its statutory meeting in May 2017 established a Cross Party Sounding Board. as part of its decision-making structure. The remit of which is to act as a sounding board and discussion forum, with no decision-making powers: to provide an opportunity to discuss matters of common interest or of Council wide relevance. The Board has a membership of six – the Leader and Depute Leader, the leaders of the three opposition political groups, and a representative of the independent members.	5.2.1
Division of leadership roles – paid service and elected representation	<p>The Chief Executive has responsibility as head of the paid service for all aspects of operational management. He leads on the implementation of decisions taken by elected members through full Council and the board structure. He has overall responsibility for managing service delivery , with clear lines of accountability throughout the senior management structure.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council has responsibility for forming an administration and enabling democratically-accountable decision-making.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council meet weekly.</p>	5.2.3
HR and OD Policies	HR & OD Polices are regularly reviewed and throughout 2023/24, new and updated policies have been presented to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board for approval. New and updated policies and plans recently approved include the revised Flexible Working and Flexible Retirement policies in June 2023, Control of Smoking at Work Policy in September 2023, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2024-29 and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan in February 2024.	5.2.8
Health and Safety Plans	The current Corporate Health and Safety Policy was approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in February 2022. Each service has its own Health and Safety Plan and working group. Health and Safety reports for each service are presented to policy boards annually. An overarching annual report on health, safety and wellbeing activity across the Council is presented to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board; the most recent report was in June 2023 .	5.2.8

SPI Direction	<p>The SPI Direction from Audit Scotland sets out the requirements of monitoring and reporting on performance indicators by Councils. The current direction was published in December 2021 and applies for three years. Councils are required to report information that details the performance of public services in a way that allows for comparison over time and with other councils, report on how it engages and empowers communities, and to demonstrate Best Value.</p>	<p>6.4.3</p>
<p>Council's Approach to Performance Management and Reporting</p>	<p>The Council's approach to performance management and reporting, both internally and externally, demonstrate compliance with multiple elements of the code of corporate governance. Our approach can be split into the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny by elected members • Scrutiny by Corporate Management Team • Scrutiny by senior managers in each service • Public performance reporting • Scrutiny by external bodies • Performance management systems <p>The Council Plan and its associated action plan and performance scorecard are one of the ways in which elected members can scrutinise performance against the strategic priorities of the Council (4.2.5; 5.1.1; 5.2.4). Progress reports are presented to the Leadership Board twice a year. Members also receive progress updates on the Community Plan.</p> <p>The Corporate Management Team (CMT) scrutinise the Council Plan scorecard and a CMT scorecard every quarter (5.2.4; 6.2.4; 6.4.3; 7.2.2), The CMT scorecard is a dynamic document and the list of indicators for scrutiny is reviewed as part of the quarterly programme, to ensure it reflects current priority areas. Each quarter, an aspect of performance is identified as a 'deep dive' area and more detailed information is brought back to CMT by the relevant Head of Service.</p> <p>Each council service produces a Service Improvement Plan (4.2.5; 5.1.1; 5.2.4) which sets out how they will contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan and how they will measure their contribution and performance. As well as allowing senior managers to track the performance of their service, this approach allows for elected member scrutiny; progress on service improvement plans is reported through policy boards every six months.</p>	<p>2.1.1 4.2.5 4.2.6 5.1.1 5.2.4 5.2.7 6.2.4 6.4.3 7.1.1 7.1.2 7.2.1 7.2.2</p>

	<p>Members also receive reports on operational performance, on corporate performance on complaints and on the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. (5.1.1; 6.4.3; 7.2.2).</p> <p>Public performance reporting (2.1.1; 7.1.1;7.1.2;7.2.1) is undertaken in the interests of transparency; it allows local residents, businesses and partner organisations to track the Council’s performance over time. Service- and Council-level performance reports are available online through the agendas and minutes of public meetings but the Council also produces an annual report which is available as a storymap on the Council’s website. This format allows for comparison with other councils on measures included in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. Performance data is accompanied by case studies which demonstrate the difference services are making to Renfrewshire.</p> <p>To ensure consistency and provide an audit trail, all performance indicators are collected, recorded and tracked using the Pentana performance management system (5.1.1).</p>	
<p>Council’s approach to risk management</p>	<p>The Council has a well-established and robust approach to risk management which includes ‘Risk Matters’, the Council’s combined risk management policy and strategy. (3.1.4; 6.1.1; 6.3.1). It is refreshed every two years; the latest version was approved by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in November 2023.</p> <p>Risk Matters is explicit regarding the Council’s risk management philosophy and regarding members’ and managers’ responsibility for risk management. The Strategic Risk Management Development Plan (6.1.1) underpins Risk Matters. It reflects the development work required to fulfil the objectives in Risk Matters, and is refreshed every two years.</p> <p>The Council maintains, monitors and reviews its corporate and strategic risk registers in line with the strategy (6.1.2; 6.3.2), and presents these every six months to the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board along with an annual report on health of the Council’s risk management arrangements.</p> <p>For 2023/24, the Council adopted a new approach to reviewing ‘business as usual’ risks on a thematic basis. Each Head of Service reviews the 12 thematic areas</p>	<p>3.1.4 6.1.1 6.1.2 6.1.3 6.3.1 6.3.2 6.5.2</p>

	<p>over the course of a year and confirms the level of assurance for their service area against each theme.</p> <p>The Council's Risk Manager is supported by the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) (6.1.2), which comprises representatives from each council service as well as specialists on particular areas of risk. This group meets regularly to discuss matters of common interest, to share learning and to co-ordinate review of risks and reporting to CMT and Board. The CRMG oversees the ongoing development, monitoring and review of the corporate risk management register arrangements and facilitates an escalation process whereby risk can be moved between corporate, business as usual or service level.</p> <p>Financial risk is included as part of the Corporate Risk Register to ensure financial management is managed and reviewed on a regular basis. (6.5.2)</p> <p>The Programme Management Unit ensure that risk assessment, monitoring and mitigation is a key part of any project and programme governance they support.</p> <p>The independent report into Dargavel Primary School identified specific issues with how risk was managed on that particular project, and made recommendations for organisational learning in relation to project-based risk, and scrutiny of such risks. A number of actions have been identified by the Council and are being implemented; details can be found in a report to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in September 2023.</p>	
<p>Council's approach to information governance</p>	<p>The corporate approach to information governance provides assurance in relation to how sensitive data is managed and stored across the organisation. Key elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Governance Strategy and Framework • Council Data-Sharing Code and individual data-sharing and data-processing agreements • Information Governance Team • Data protection policies and procedures • Information Governance Learning and Development Strategy • Internal and external audits 	<p>1.2.4 6.4.1 6.4.2</p>

	<p>The Council has a Data Sharing Code, based on the ICO Code, which was updated in December 2021. (6.4.2). Where data is being shared, appropriate data-sharing and/or data-processing agreements are in place and these are held in a central repository (6.4.2). These agreements specify security requirements.</p> <p>The Managing Solicitor (DPO) reports monitoring figures to the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) on a monthly basis, and to CMT at least twice a year (6.4.1). The Council is subject to routine external audit by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as well as internal audit. (6.4.1)</p> <p>There are clear procedures in place for reporting any data breach, however minor, and mandatory training is in place for any staff who work with data. Such staff are required to undertake refresher training on an annual basis.</p>	
<p>Elected Member Training and Development</p>	<p>The CPD framework for Councillors was developed by the Improvement Service and all members have access to it. Members are encouraged to assess their own development needs and develop a personal development plan. Using the Improvement Service CPD framework, Councillors can opt to undertake a 360° peer review of their performance as an Elected Member. (5.2.6)</p> <p>In Renfrewshire, focused development for elected members takes place regularly through a programme of development events and opportunities is issued to members on a monthly basis. As 2022 was an election year, a comprehensive induction package was delivered for newly-elected and returning members.</p> <p>The members' development programme provides members with briefings as soon as practicable when new legislation is introduced, e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation.</p> <p>Members who are involved in taking quasi-judicial decisions, e.g. planning, licensing, are briefed regularly on their responsibilities. Members who sit on the Licensing Board must undertake and pass a mandatory training course. There is a training programme in place for members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board and the Chief Auditor provides a regular briefing programme for Board members, to assist them in fulfilling the audit committee role.</p>	<p>1.2.2 2.1.2 5.2.1 5.2.4 5.2.6 5.2.7</p>

	<p>To reduce the reporting of routine operational matters to policy boards and to allow Boards to focus on policy issues, a range of matters including the exercise of delegated authority by officers are reported to members by means of a regular bulletin rather than a formal report to a Policy Board (2.1.2). Members have also been provided with briefings specifically focused on the Council's response to the pandemic as required.</p> <p>An annual record of elected member training is available online after the end of each financial year.</p>	
Transparency of Council meetings	<p>Meetings of the full Council, of Policy Boards, Policy Board sub-committees and the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board are all open to the public, unless there is a valid reason under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public from all or part of the meeting. Where a recommendation is made for a matter to be held in private, the reason for this will be identified in the agenda and in the minutes of the meeting.</p> <p>These meetings are also webcast live and the recordings retained and made available via the Council's website for anyone who wishes to view them. Meetings can be conducted fully in-person, fully online or as a hybrid.</p> <p>The timetable for these meetings is published well in advance (meetings are currently timetabled until the end of 2023) and the agenda and papers are available online several days' prior to the meeting taking place. Only those items which contain exempt or confidential information will not be shared publicly.</p>	<p>2.1.1 2.1.2 2.1.3 3.2.3 4.1.1 4.2.1 6.2.2</p>
Staff Training and Development	<p>Staff are able to access professional training courses if required to enable them to carry out specific roles (1.3.2).</p> <p>The 'Our People Our Future 2021-26' strategy (5.1.4) was approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in March 2021 and replaces the Organisational Development Strategy and Workforce Plans. A further update was approved by the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in September 2023. It makes a commitment to investing in the workforce to ensure people are supported and equipped with the right skills to deliver on the council's ambitious outcomes for Renfrewshire. The Strategy offers a more flexible approach and will be owned by and embedded within services and is fully aligned</p>	<p>1.3.2 5.1.4 5.2.4</p>

	<p>with their needs. Regular reports on implementation, including new and revised policies, are considered at the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board.</p> <p>The Council's online learning platform, which has recently been refreshed, has a wide range of e-learning modules available to employees to support their learning and development. It includes an induction programme for new employees and a number of mandatory courses on areas such as data protection/information security. It also includes a range of courses suitable for aspiring and current managers. (5.2.4).</p> <p>In 2023, a programme of leadership development for senior management was launched in conjunction with SOLACE. The first phase has been rolled it with CMT and the next phase is targeting senior managers.</p> <p>The Council's management development programme, Lead to Succeed, has three levels (Inspire, Influence, Impact) which provide training for aspiring and current managers at all levels of the organisation. The training is linked to a CMI qualification.</p>	
Internal Audit function	<p>The Council's Internal Audit Charter sets out the authority, responsibility independence and reporting lines for internal audit activities (1.3.4; 6.3.4).</p> <p>The outcomes of internal audit reviews (5.1.1) are reported to Audit, Risk and Scrutiny, providing overall assurance rating and the number of recommendations in each risk category for these reviews. The committee summary for each report is also provided. For each audit assignment where recommendations have been made, an action plan is put in place to address these.</p> <p>In terms of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (6.3.1; 7.3.2), the Council's Chief Auditor submits quarterly reports on internal audit performance and an annual report to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board on the activities of internal audit to demonstrate performance and containing a view on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. Again, in terms of the above standards, regular reports are submitted to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in relation to the findings of the Council's internal and external auditors which details the main issues arising.</p>	<p>1.3.4 1.3.5 5.1.1 6.3.1 6.3.3 6.3.4 7.3.2</p>

	The findings of any internal audit investigations are reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board as they arise. For security reasons, these reports are marked exempt and not publicly available.	
Consultation and engagement mechanisms	<p>The Council's Have Your Say page on the website provides links to all active consultations and surveys, which are open to all residents to participate in. The Council has also launched a Customer Feedback Database and invites all residents to join the database and to share their views on council services.</p> <p>There are theme/service specific opportunities to engage with the Council. Tenants' and Residents' Associations provide a mechanism for engaging with the Council on housing issues. The Climate Panel meet regularly to discuss local priorities for Net Zero by 2030. The Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel help inform work on tackling inequalities.</p>	<p>2.1.4 2.3.1 2.3.3 2.3.4 3.2.3 4.1.2 5.2.5</p>
Counter-fraud measures	<p>The Council has a strategy for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption, which was introduced in 2019. Any matters coming to light are investigated by Internal Audit or Counter-Fraud. The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board receives regular reports detailing such investigations (these reports are exempt under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973).</p> <p>An Anti-Money Laundering Policy was introduced in June 2017.</p>	<p>1.3.5 6.3.3</p>
External scrutiny	<p>The Council is independently evaluated by bodies such as the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, the Accounts Commission and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (who considers complaints against the Council). These bodies publish scrutiny reports etc on their websites.</p> <p>Accounts Commission scrutiny is reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board (and /or full Council as appropriate). School inspections are reported to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board. Care Inspectorate reports which include any gradings of Adequate or below are reported to the Education and Children's Services Board. Inspections of community learning and development are reported to the Communities and Housing Policy Board.</p>	<p>7.3.3</p>

	<p>External scrutiny includes Best Value Audits. Since 2023, Audit Scotland has adopted a new approach to BV, preparing annual thematic reports which consider all councils, as well as undertaking the full process with selected councils. Renfrewshire's first thematic report under the new approach was presented to the Audit, Scrutiny and Risk Board in November 2023.</p>	
<p>Communications</p>	<p>The Council communicates with members of the community and its stakeholders (and vice versa) through several mechanisms including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Forums • Community Planning Groups • Community Councils • Local Partnerships • Council Website • Complaints procedure • Public Performance reports • Customer Service Channels <p>An internal communications and engagement strategy was developed and approved by the Corporate Management Team in June 2020. The strategy outlines a number of methods to improve internal communications across the Council.</p> <p>Communication is <i>everyone's</i> responsibility and a fundamental aspect of this is empowering leaders and managers to communicate well. Effective communications help to make the vision and values a reality by supporting Council services, encouraging cultural and behavioural change and enabling new levels of engagement.</p> <p>Our Values were launched in June 2020 and work continues to embed these values in everything we do including working with HR & OD to weave these into the full employee lifecycle/journey. Initial training on this is already available on the council's iLearn platform.</p> <p>An internal communications and engagement strategy was developed on the approach the Council will use to engage with staff.</p>	<p>2.2.1 2.3.2 4.2.2</p>

	<p>Various internal communication channels are used, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Staff News - Take 5' - weekly staff update; • staff monthly newsletter; • fortnightly - Chief Executive's Blog; • regular Team Briefs for managers to inform and update staff on key issues; • use of text messaging and posters to reach frontline workers; • new 'Staff information' section on website including staff news and a dedicated 'Staff advice on Coronavirus' with latest Government advice, coronavirus absence protocols, working safely during coronavirus guides and staff wellbeing guides; • use of Microsoft Yammer for news and staff updates; • Pulse survey on internal comms during the pandemic; and • a working from home survey to gain understanding of staff viewpoints and supports required. <p>Directed by the council's marketing and communications strategy, we manage various council channels – including the council website, developed to ensure regular direct communication and the sharing of information with residents, with mechanisms for feedback and response (monitored for effectiveness), we use external media and partners to reach audiences beyond our channel reach and maximise awareness, and we have developed a network of local channels (122) operated by local groups who support the cascade and sharing of council news and information. Council communications can be a mix of public campaigns, information on service updates, council decisions and policy changes, and spotlights on the people who deliver council services and those who benefit from them. The overall aim is to communicate our progress on the commitments made in the Council Plan.</p>	
<p>Participatory Budgeting</p>	<p>The Council has delivered participatory budgeting through the Celebrating Renfrewshire (for children and young people) and You Decide (currently focused on Environment and Infrastructure). In 2023, Celebrating Renfrewshire allowed young people to decide how to distribute funding to community groups to deliver projects prioritising health and wellbeing, life skills, climate change and diversionary activities and the funding awards can be found on the Young Scot portal. The winning projects from You Decide in 2023 included new equipment in</p>	<p>2.3.3</p>

	play parks, additional street lighting, and accessibility improvements to pedestrian walkways.	
Financial governance framework	<p>The Council has in place financial regulations, which set out the responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Resources, along with the responsibilities of other authorised individuals in relation to the financial affairs of the Council. The regulations also set out the responsibility of Boards for financial affairs. (1.3.1; 1.3.2; 1.3.4; 6.2.5).</p> <p>Council receives regular updates on the financial position of the organisation. Financial reports detailing revenue expenditure and income are made to Policy Boards throughout the year and are based on the total cost of the main divisions of service and the total cost based on the key expenditure headings such as employee costs, etc. These reports provide projected outturns and are also used to advise members of any anticipated deviation from budget. Capital expenditure and income reports also follow this same process with each capital project showing the previous year's cumulative spend.</p> <p>Through the regular submission of budget reports to Policy Boards, the publication of the Annual Accounts, submission of the annual audit report and other audit reports to the Council and/or Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board as appropriate and by publishing performance information on the Council's website, the Council demonstrates transparency and compliance with statutory reporting requirements.</p> <p>The medium-term financial strategy is presented to Council each year along with regular financial outlook updates, and sets out the current financial position and the significant financial challenges to be faced in the forthcoming years, together with likely indications of grant and spending levels. Overall, the Council's medium-term financial position takes into consideration all known influencing factors.</p>	1.3.1 1.3.2 1.3.4 4.2.7 4.2.8 4.3.1 4.3.2 4.3.3 6.2.5 6.5.1 7.2.1 7.2.5
Transformation programme to support financial sustainability	The Council's Right for Renfrewshire (RFR) transformation programme was paused during the pandemic but the outstanding workstreams are now progressing alongside a wider financial sustainability programme which includes a review of the Council's property portfolio and other corporate and service savings in order to close the gap in the budget (estimated at £9.3m for 2024/25 excluding any decision on the level of Council Tax). Some of these workstreams are enablers	3.2.2 4.1.1 4.2.8 4.3.1 4.3.2 4.3.3

	which, whilst not delivering savings in their own right, allow for changes in the delivery of services which will generate savings. Examples are the Digital Experience project and improvements to Purchase to Pay (P2P) processes.	6.5.1
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