

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board
DATE: 7 January 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy
SUBJECT: Local Code of Corporate Governance
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Business Efficiency Board to review the Council's draft Local Code of Corporate Governance and recommend its approval to the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That the Business Efficiency Board reviews the draft Local Code of Corporate Governance and recommends it is referred to the Council for adoption and inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

3.1 CIPFA and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) have published an updated governance framework for local authorities – 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. This draft Local Code of Corporate Governance has been developed in response to that publication.

3.2 Good governance is defined as "the way in which an organisation ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner".

3.3 Whilst adoption of a local code of corporate governance is not a statutory requirement, it is considered to represent best practice. The purpose of the code is to provide a public statement showing how the Council complies with the principles of good governance.

3.4 The Council's governance arrangements have been assessed against the principles set out in the Framework document by the Corporate Governance Group, which comprises:

- The Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy
- The Monitoring Officer
- The Operational Director – Financial Services (s151 officer)
- The Operational Director – Policy & Performance

- The Chief Internal Auditor
 - The Chief Scrutiny Officer
- 3.5 This review has informed the production of a draft Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is attached to this report. This identifies:
- The systems, processes and documentation that provides evidence of compliance with the principles of good governance; and
 - The individuals and committees responsible for monitoring and reviewing the systems, processes and documentation identified.
- 3.6 The effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, and the way in which compliance with them is monitored, is required by legislation to be publicly reported upon in the Annual Governance Statement, which is published with the Council's financial statements.
- 3.7 The Business Efficiency Board is responsible for reviewing and approving the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The diagram in Appendix 1 shows the framework established to provide members with assurance over the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements.

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The development of a Local Code of Corporate Governance effectively draws together into one comprehensive document, the Council's individual policies, practices, cultures and values that help to ensure the proper conduct of its business.
- 4.2 There are no financial or legal issues arising directly from this report. However, the draft Local Code of Corporate Governance explains the arrangements in place to ensure that the Council:
- Provides value for money to taxpayers and service users;
 - Recognises the limits of lawful action and observes both the specific responsibilities of legislation and the general responsibilities placed upon it by public law.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

See 4.1 above.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

See 4.1 above.

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

See 4.1 above.

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

See 4.1 above.

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

See 4.1 above.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 Good governance is essential to ensure that local authorities are meeting the needs of their citizens and service users and are developing their community leadership role. Poor governance will adversely impact on effectiveness and lead to poorer public services and loss of public confidence.

6.2 The way in which the Council promotes and demonstrates the principles and values of good governance forms part of the annual 'Use of Resources' assessment. Failure to adopt a Local Code of Corporate Governance would represent a missed opportunity to publicise and strengthen the Council's governance arrangements.

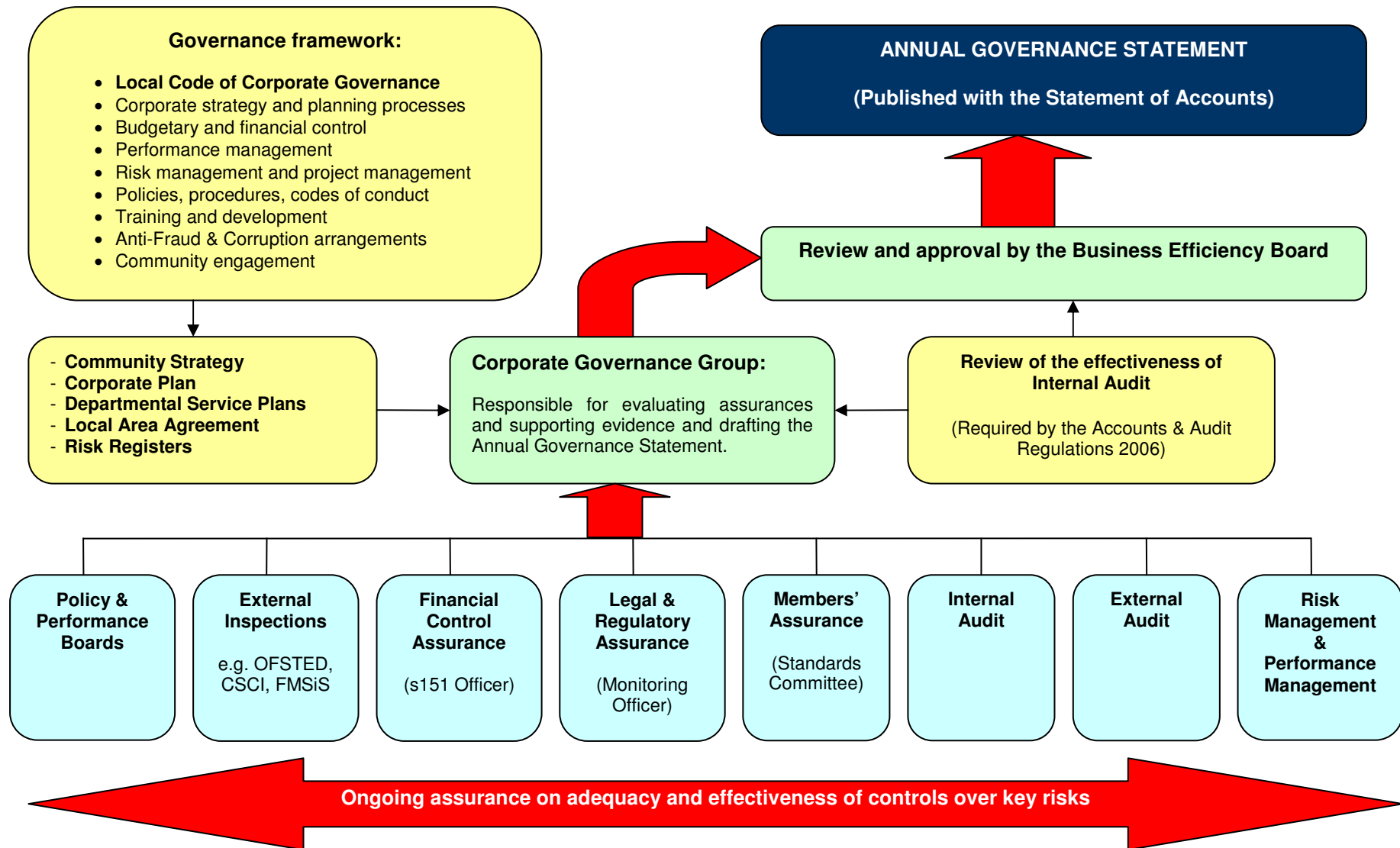
7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The adoption of a Local Code of Corporate Governance would help to demonstrate that the Council recognises its accountability to its diverse communities.

8.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact
CIPFA / SOLACE – Delivering good governance in Local Government: Framework (2007)	6 th Floor, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes	Mervyn Murphy

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT – ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK



HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Governance is about how an organisation such as a local authority ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It is made up of the systems, processes, cultures and values, by which the organisation is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, in the case of a local authority, leads the community.
- 1.2 Good governance leads to good management, good performance and good stewardship of public money. It therefore enables the Council to effectively implement its vision in accordance with its values and to engage effectively with its citizens and service users and ensure good outcomes for them.
- 1.3 Halton Borough Council is committed to meeting best practice standards for good governance. This Code provides a public statement that sets out the way in which the Council will meet and demonstrate that commitment.

2. Principles of Corporate Governance

- 2.1 The Council operates through a governance framework which brings together and reflects legal requirements, governance principles and good management processes.
- 2.2 The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance is based on the following six core principles:
 - (1) Focusing on the Council's purpose and on outcomes for the community.
 - (2) Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
 - (3) Promoting the Council's values and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.
 - (4) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
 - (5) Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.
 - (6) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability.

2.3 Supporting each of the core principles is a series of supporting principles. The way in which the Council has translated these principles into its governance framework is described in the appendix to this Code.

3. Monitoring and Review

3.1 The Council has two Committees that are jointly responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Council's corporate governance arrangements:

(1) The Business Efficiency Board is responsible for:

- Acting as the Council's Audit Committee;
- Approving the Council's Accounts;
- Approving the Annual Governance Statement;
- Monitoring performance against the Council's Efficiency Strategy.

(2) The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the authority.

3.2 The Corporate Governance Group will be responsible for monitoring and providing assurance on the governance process and making reports to the Business Efficiency Board and Standards Committee as appropriate. Its membership will include:

- The Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy
- The Monitoring Officer
- The Operational Director – Financial Services (s151 officer)
- The Operational Director – Policy & Performance, and
- The Chief Internal Auditor
- The Chief Scrutiny Officer

3.3 Assurance that the Council's corporate governance framework is operating as intended will come from a range of sources that include:

- Audit Commission Organisational Assessments
- Self-assessment against regulatory frameworks
- External inspections
- External Audit
- Internal Audit
- Standards Committee
- Policy & Performance Boards
- Performance management framework
- Risk management framework
- Budgetary control and financial management processes

4. Annual Governance Statement

- 4.1 Each year the Council will review its corporate governance arrangements and publish an Annual Governance Statement. This will describe the arrangements that have been in place during the year and highlight any areas where improvement is required.

- 4.2 The Annual Governance Statement will be published as part of the Council's Statement of Accounts and will be reviewed by the Council's external auditor.

Signed: _____
(Chief Executive)

Signed: _____
(Council Leader)

How Halton Borough Council applies the Principles of Good Governance

Principle 1: Focusing on the Council's purpose and on outcomes for the community

Supporting Principle:	Being clear about the Council's purpose and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
1.1	We have determined and published our vision and long term priorities for Halton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Plan 2006-2011
1.2	We have developed a long term strategy for the local area with our partners. It is based on consultation with local people about the sort of place they want the area to be. The strategy co-ordinates the actions of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011
1.3	We have agreed targets with Central Government that are based on the improvements that local people want to see.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Area Agreement• Local Public Service Agreement
1.4	Our corporate planning framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of our community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Departmental Service Plans
1.5	We publish our annual financial statements on the Council's website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abstract of Accounts

Supporting Principle:

Making sure that users receive a high quality of service.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
1.6	We aim to ensure that the purchase or commissioning of goods, services and works required to deliver services are acquired under Best Value terms and are in accordance with our Strategic Priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procurement Policy and Improvement Plan• Procurement Standing Orders
1.7	We have established a range of performance indicators used to measure progress against our key priorities. These are reported to the Corporate Management Team and to the Policy and Performance Boards (PPBs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarterly monitoring reports
1.8	We have established arrangements to ensure that services provided, whether directly or by contractors, partners or the voluntary sector, are delivered to a high standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract monitoring procedures
1.9	We have effective procedures to respond to complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate complaints procedure
1.10	We have developed arrangements to ensure that critical service delivery can be maintained or recovered during an emergency,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business Continuity Plans

Supporting Principle:

Making sure that taxpayers and service users receive value for money.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
1.11	One of our priorities is 'Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery', the aim of which is to "create the maximum effect on the quality of life in the communities of Halton through the efficient use of the Council's resources".	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Plan 2006-2011
1.12	We have developed, and are implementing, a strategy that formalises what we can do to ensure that we make the most of the resources available to continue to improve services and provide positive benefits for the people of Halton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficiency Strategy• Departmental Service Plans reflect efficiency improvements
1.13	We have established arrangements to ensure that financial resources are directed to our priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium Term Financial Strategy• Capital Programme• Revenue budget process
1.14	We have an internal audit function that provides a continuous audit of the Council's activities. It examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal Audit Strategy• Annual Internal Audit Plan• Internal Audit reports
1.15	Our external auditors provide an annual assessment on how well we are managing and using our resources to deliver value for money and better and sustainable outcomes for local people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of Resources assessment
1.16	We have developed robust procedures to respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action plans developed in response to external inspections

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
1.17	We have established arrangements to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy • Fraud Response Plan • Whistle-blowing Policy (Confidential Reporting Code) • A Benefits Investigation Unit whose primary task is to detect Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit fraud and take appropriate legal action against people who commit this type of fraud. • An internal audit function which is alert to the risk of fraud and corruption when reviewing the Council's systems and services.
1.18	The financial management of the Council's schools is externally assessed every three years to ensure that they are exercising effective financial control and stewardship over the significant amounts of public money delegated to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Management Standard in Schools assessment and accreditation

Principle 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

Supporting Principle:	Being clear about the Council's executive and non-executive functions and the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
2.1	<p>We have produced a documented framework that sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.</p> <p>This framework sets out the roles and responsibilities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Executive, the Leader and other Executive Members;• Policy & Performance Boards, which advise the Executive and Council on its policies, budgets and service delivery;• The committees established to fulfil the Council's regulatory and other functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council Constitution

Supporting Principle:

Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
2.2	We have clearly documented protocols governing relationships between members and officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member / Officer Protocol
2.3	We have clearly defined the relative roles and responsibilities of Members and senior officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council Constitution• Councillor Role Profiles• Job descriptions
2.4	We have delegated most functions to the Executive and its sub-committees/boards with the exception of certain functions that are reserved for decision by Full Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council Constitution
2.5	The Chief Executive is responsible for and accountable to the Council for all aspects of operational management.	
2.6	The Operational Director – Financial Services, as the s151 Officer appointed under the 1972 Local Government Act, carries overall responsibility for the financial administration of the Council.	
2.7	The Monitoring Officer (Operational Director – Legal, Organisational Development & Human Resources) carries overall responsibility for legal and regulatory compliance. The Monitoring Officer is required to report to Members should any proposal, decision or omission give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration.	

Supporting Principle:

Being clear about relationships between the Council, its partners and the public.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
2.8	We have developed a protocol to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member/Officer protocol
2.9	We have clearly set out terms and conditions for the remuneration of members and officers and there is an effective structure for managing the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent Remuneration Panel• Members Allowance Scheme• Pay and Grading Review
2.10	We have established a range of mechanisms to communicate our service objectives and to monitor performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Area Agreement• Departmental Service Plans• National and local performance indicators• Corporate Performance Management Framework• Partnership Performance Management Framework• Customer satisfaction surveys• Corporate complaints procedure• Line management responsibilities
2.11	We have developed our vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders. We ensure that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.	<p>Communities and stakeholders are consulted through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular residents' surveys• Use of citizens' panels• Focus groups• Stakeholder consultation• Neighbourhood Management boards• Area Forums <p>Communities and stakeholders are kept in touch through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Newspaper• Area Forums

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
2.12	We remind Members about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to partnership working. We also provide training for officers on partnership ethics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's website • The Council's partners' websites • Stakeholder groups
2.13	All joint or partnering arrangements with other bodies are subject to the prior approval of the Operational Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Standing Orders
2.14	Our significant partnerships have been identified and work is ongoing to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place for those partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance of Partnerships Checklist • The work of Internal Audit • A Code of Practice for Partnership working is being developed

Principle 3: Promoting the Council's values and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour

Supporting Principle:	Ensuring that members and officers behave in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
3.1	We have defined and communicated the standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and employees through codes of conduct and protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members' Code of Conduct• Employee Code of Conduct• Member/Officer Protocol• Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy• Standing Orders relating to Finance• Procurement Standing Orders• Member Training Programme• Dignity at Work Policy• Equal Opportunities Policy• Induction procedures• Members' Information Bulletin
3.2	We have put into place arrangements to ensure that Members and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. We have also established appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registers of Interests• Registers of Gifts & Hospitality• Whistle-blowing Policy (Confidential Reporting Code)• Systems to report and deal with any incidents of fraud and corruption• Grievance procedures• Internal Audit

Supporting Principle:

Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
3.3	We have developed and maintain shared values, including leadership values, for both the organisation and employees that reflect public expectations. We communicate these values to Members, employees, the community and our partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Induction procedures• Human Resources policies• Publication of an Annual Governance Statement
3.4	We have put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and we monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring Officer role• Internal Audit• Corporate complaints procedure• The role of the Standards Committee in supporting Members' observation of their Code of Conduct• Employee Development Review procedures• Performance Management Framework
3.5	We have established an effective Standards Committee that promotes high standards of conduct and supports Members' observation of their Code of Conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards Committee Terms of Reference• Standards Committee minutes and agendas• Standards Committee training• Publicising the process to complain about Members' conduct

Principle 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Supporting Principle:	Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
4.1	We operate an open and effective process for decision-making. We publish key decisions in the Council's Forward Plan. Our Council meetings are open to the public with the exception of where confidential or personal matters may be disclosed. We publish minutes of all Council meetings on our website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution • Forward Plan • Minutes of Council meetings
4.2	We have established six Policy & Performance Boards (PPBs) to provide an effective scrutiny function that encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Council's performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPBs' Terms of Reference • Minutes of PPB meetings
4.3	We have put into place arrangements to safeguard Members and employees against conflicts of interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers of Interests • Registers of Gifts & Hospitality • Declarations of personal or prejudicial interests at the start of each meeting in which discussions involve a matter in which a Member has an interest. • The Monitoring Officer may be approached to advise on conflicts of interest.
4.4	We have designated the Business Efficiency Board (BEB) as the Council's Audit Committee. The Board is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions. Its terms of reference are consistent with CIPFA guidance on Audit Committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BEB Terms of Reference • Minutes of BEB meetings
4.5	We have established effective, transparent and accessible arrangements to deal with complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate complaints procedure

Supporting Principle:	Having and using good-quality information, advice and support.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
4.6	We have established, and are continuing to develop, sound systems for providing management information for performance measurement and decision-making purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework • Data Quality Strategy
4.7	We provide decision-makers with information that is fit for purpose. This includes ensuring that decision-makers are provided with clear explanations of legal, financial and technical issues and their implications. We provide training to Members to ensure that we have a strong basis for quality decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The executive report template requires information to be provided explaining the legal and financial implications of decisions, as well as implications for each of the corporate priorities. • Advice on financial, legal and technical issues is provided by the s151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and other officers as required. • Reports are sent to decision-makers with the agenda of meetings on a timely basis. • The Council publishes a Forward Plan listing key decisions to be taken. • Policy is evidence based. The Community Strategy and Corporate Plan are based on regularly updated 'State of the Borough' reports, which bring together key facts and statistics with the result of surveys and consultation. Strategic needs analyses of Health, the economy and Community Safety have been undertaken. • Member Training Programme.

Supporting Principle:	Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
4.8	We have put in place risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function, which are continually being developed. Members and officers at all levels recognise that risk management is part of their jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Policy and Toolkit • Corporate Risk Register • Directorate Risk Registers linked to Departmental Service Plans • A Partnership Risk Register produced by the five specialist strategic partnerships (SSPs) • Member and officer training on risk management • The executive report template contains a section to consider the 'risk implications' of any decisions. • Internal Audit • The Business Efficiency Board reviews the Internal Audit work programme and oversees the implementation of audit recommendations. • Health and safety policies and procedures
4.9	We have established effective arrangements for 'whistle-blowing'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential Reporting Code • Fraud telephone hotline • On-line reporting facility on the Council website

Supporting Principle:

Using legal powers to the full benefit of citizens and communities.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
4.10	We actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on the Council but also strive to utilise our legal powers to the full benefit of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the functions of the Monitoring Officer is to ensure the lawfulness and fairness of decision making.
4.11	We recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The executive report template contains a section to consider the 'legal implications' of any decisions.• The Legal Services Division produces a regular legal bulletin to update officers on relevant changes in legislation.
4.12	We observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon the Council, as well as the requirements of general law and, in particular, integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into our procedures and decision-making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involvement of the Council's legal advisors in all major issues.• Member and officer training.

Principle 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

Supporting Principle:	Making sure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
5.1	We provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Members and Officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member and employee induction programmes• Member training programme• Employee training and development programme• Achieving and maintaining the Investor in People Standard
5.2	We ensure that the Council's statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are understood throughout the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Departmental Service Plans reflect human resource requirements• Employee Development Review procedure• Job descriptions and person specifications have been produced for all posts• Recruitment and appointment policies and procedures• Reports from inspectorates and regulators• Systems exist to cascade information to Members and employees• Publication of the Constitution on the intranet and Council website

Supporting Principle:	Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
5.3	We assess the skills required by Members and employees and are committed to developing those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member induction programme • Corporate (employee) induction programme
5.4	We develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge, and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal development interviews for Members • Standards Board training
5.5	We ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Development Plan • North West Charter for Elected Member Development - Exemplar Level status • Training opportunities for members individually and collectively, including a programme of seminars on topical matters • Comprehensive training programme for officers backed up by regular Employee Development Reviews

Supporting Principle:

Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
5.6	We have established arrangements to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to, and participate in the work of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals are encouraged to participate in the work of the Council through extensive consultation on plans and strategies.• The Council's newspaper and website informs the community of forthcoming meetings, events and items in which the community are able to participate.
5.7	We will ensure that career structures are in place for Members and employees to encourage participation and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Development Plan• Member training programme• Employee training and development programme• Employee Development Reviews• Personal development interviews for Members

Principle 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability

Supporting Principle:	Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.
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Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
6.1	We are accountable to local people and institutional stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elected Members are democratically accountable to their local area and this provides a clear leadership role in building sustainable communities.• The Corporate Plan is published on the Council's website.• The 'call in' procedure allows members to examine decisions made by the Executive in detail. Decisions may be 'called in', which means that implementation does not take place immediately to allow an opportunity for further consideration.• Elected members are involved in the Halton Strategic Partnership Board and its Specialist Strategic Partnerships (SSPs). Partnership minutes and performance are reported to the PPBs.• PPBs co-opt additional members, for example, LiNK representatives on the Healthy Halton PPB.• Provision exists in the Council's Constitution for the consideration of petitions.• Our financial statements are audited and published on the Council website.• Our External Auditor provides an annual organisational assessment of the Council's performance.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1299 271 2069 343">• We receive reports from numerous inspectorates and regulators throughout the year.<li data-bbox="1299 375 2069 446">• We are subject to, and report on performance against, a range of national indicators.

Supporting Principle:

Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
6.2	We ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership Community Engagement Strategy• Communication Strategy• Council website• Council minutes and agendas• Monthly staff magazine• Council Newspaper• Formal consultation arrangements include the Halton 2000 Citizen's Panel, the seven Area Forums, the Youth Forum and the Older Person's engagement network.• Informal consultation arrangements include contact via our website, Halton Direct Link and magazine based customer surveys.• Community and voluntary sector representatives have decision-making roles on the Halton Strategic Partnership Board and on all its SSPs.• Neighbourhood Management Partnership• Development of a Stakeholder Involvement Toolkit.

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
6.3	We hold Council meetings in public, unless there are good reasons for confidentiality, and we allow the public the opportunity to speak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council meeting minutes and agendas
6.4	We have arrangements in place to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Community Strategy • Area Forums • Strategies, policies and other publications are available in alternative formats upon request.
6.5	We have established a clear policy on the types of issues that the public and service users will be consulted on. This includes providing a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement Strategy • The Community Engagement Practitioners Network is responsible for developing a central register of all engagement activities across the Council. • Information regarding community engagement is clearly articulated on a dedicated section of the Halton Strategic Partnership website.
6.6	We publish performance information that gives information on the Council's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements. We also publish information about outcomes, achievements and service user satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We publish a summary of performance information and our financial statements. This is distributed to every household with the Council Newspaper. • Performance information and performance reports are published on the Council's website. • Places Survey (satisfaction survey)

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
6.7	The Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and employees. We have a commitment to openness and transparency in all our dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1312 240 2051 304">• Council agendas and minutes are published on the Council's website<li data-bbox="1312 344 1921 371">• Freedom of Information Publication Scheme<li data-bbox="1312 411 2051 475">• Publication of Management Team minutes on the intranet<li data-bbox="1312 515 1576 544">• Staff Team Briefs

Supporting Principle:

Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the staff.

Ref How we apply the principles

6.8 We have developed and maintain a clear policy on how employees and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision-making.

How this is evidenced

- Trade Unions consultation
- Staff surveys
- Employee Development Reviews
- Chat with the Chief Executive meetings
- Team Briefings with feedback mechanism
- Staff suggestion scheme
- Monthly staff newsletter