

## **Annual Governance Statement 2020/21**

### **Executive Summary**

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) explains the processes and systems which give assurance for the effectiveness of the County Council's discharge of its responsibilities. It covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

During this period work continued to address weaknesses in governance identified through earlier external inspections of Children's Services and the Fire and Rescue Service. Improvements have been driven through the Good Governance Project.

The year was dominated by the continuing national public health emergency and the impact of this event on the Council's governance is also addressed.

A summary of assurance is given for each of the seven principles on which the Statement is based. At the end of the narrative on each principle are the actions to address the issues identified within the year which will further strengthen the governance arrangements for the County Council.

### **The Purpose of the Governance Assurance Framework**

1. The County Council must ensure it functions in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, correctly accounted for and used economically and efficiently. It must show how it can offer assurance as to the proper governance of its affairs (including as pensions administrator), the effective exercise of its responsibilities and the sound management of risk.
2. The Council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Financing & Accounting (CIPFA) Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. It meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
3. The governance framework comprises the rules, procedures, systems and processes by which the Council is managed and controlled. The quality of the framework underpins trust in public services. The Annual Statement shows how the Council uses the framework to give assurance to members, partners, stakeholders and residents and provides an opportunity for the County Council to examine the framework to assure itself that the arrangements for its governance are robust.

### **The Governance Assurance Framework Principles**

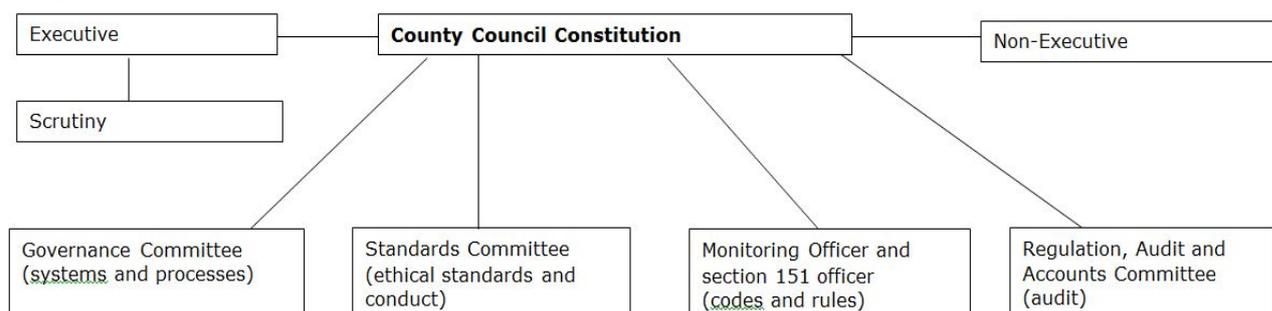
4. There are seven principles and sub-principles of Corporate Governance adopted by the Governance Committee set out below. Assurance for how they are met is provided in the text below each principle in the report. Further work to be done is highlighted and also set out in the appendix.

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

### The County Council's Governance Framework

5. The framework covers the allocation of functions, the rules for how they are carried out and the mechanisms for tracking that this happens correctly. The relationship of responsibilities is shown here:

The Governance Framework at West Sussex County Council



### Public Health Emergency

6. In March 2020, a national public health emergency was declared by the Government in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. This persisted throughout the period covered by this report. The County Council was prepared through its Resilience and Emergencies planning. Services were quickly refocused to prioritise preserving life and essential services and the implementation of additional service and interventions in response to the national priorities. This response was led through a resilience command chain with the Executive Leadership Team and external partners providing strong strategic oversight at Gold level, with directors managing tactical planning at Silver level and Bronze level service continuity and delivery groups. The incident is ongoing into 2021/22 and the County Council will continue to prioritise its response whilst it works on recovery and plans for service continuity. This disruption to normal corporate business and the service, resource, staffing and financial consequences will be assessed as part of corporate planning and

will influence the commitments made in this Statement, which will be kept under review.

7. A number of additional governance arrangements were implemented to manage decision making and resource allocation in response to the emergency and to manage funding streams and grant allocations from central government. There were supplementary procurement measures requiring governance for assurance that payments and financial commitments made in response to the impact of the emergency on suppliers and service providers were managed correctly and in a timely way. In so far as possible these are covered in the report where relevant to the area of assurance being addressed.
8. Assurance for use of resources has been provided through staff working remotely through the County Council's secure IT network and use of virtual meetings through an end to end encrypted network. Guidance has been issued to managers on working with remote teams so that regular communication is in place. The Employee Support Programme has been advertised regularly to staff via a variety of channels to help to promote good staff welfare during this period of remote working.

### **Section A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law**

#### **Assured**

The County Council has high standards for sound governance as set out in law, government guidance and the courts. It promotes a culture of compliance.

The Council's codes of conduct set out expectations and requirements for behaving with integrity for both members and officers. Action was taken to provide assurance that they continue to be implemented fully and correctly.

In this and in other sections of the Statement the governance issues raised by the 2019 Children's Commissioner's report are addressed. Where relevant, actions identified in the Council's 'Good Governance' project are also set out.

9. The **Governance Committee** oversees the democratic arrangements of the County Council and reviews and advises the County Council on the Constitution. The Responsibility for Functions (including the Scheme of Delegation) and Standing Orders require members and officers to ensure that all decisions are compliant with internal policies and procedures as well as with law and regulation. These give authority and certainty to the allocation of responsibilities as set out in the Constitution.
10. Part 5 of the Constitution contains the Code of Conduct for members. A parallel code for officers sits in the suite of Human Resources policies. The Council has also adopted policies relating to responsibilities for ethical behaviour including equality and sustainability. Decision-making is supported by advice from officers and internal guidance that should ensure compliance with these policies.

11. The statutory roles of the Chief Financial Officer (s.151 officer) and the Monitoring Officer are set out in the Constitution and in the scheme of delegation. They provide oversight of propriety and lawfulness. They have a direct reporting line to the Chief Executive and are involved in all major decision-making as part of the Executive Leadership Team and as well as being signatories to all key and other significant decisions.
12. The **codes of conduct** define the standards of behaviour for members and officers. All members undertake training from the Monitoring Officer on the member code of conduct. Member conduct is monitored by the Standards Committee, which has a remit to deal with complaints of breaches of the member Code of Conduct. All members complete the register of interests and receive quarterly reminders on the subject of personal interest declarations and it is a standing item on all formal meeting agendas for both officers and members.
13. The Council has a **whistleblowing policy** to offer a route for challenges to processes or actions within the Council where complainants need confidentiality. The use and effectiveness of the policy is overseen by the Standards Committee. Following its refresh in early 2020 action has been taken to improve its accessibility and visibility for staff and to provide advice and guidance to officers responsible for dealing with referrals under the policy. This has involved independent assurance and benchmarking for the Council's arrangements. This work has particular significance in light of the more critical issues raised by the Children's Commissioner's report relating to the Council's internal culture.
14. Officer interests, including gifts and hospitality, should be published on the County Council's website annually. This has not happened for some time. Mechanisms for recording officer interests, gifts and hospitality were last reviewed in June 2018 and endorsed by the Standards Committee. A system for recording is in place. It requires regular action by Directors to facilitate publication as currently this is not consistent across the organisation. Action is taken each year as part of the AGS work to reinforce the importance of this process. Due to further changes to the senior leadership team during 2020 it has continued to be a challenge to secure and maintain a consistent approach but more recent stability in senior leadership has improved this.
15. The Council's Standing Orders on Contracts and Procurement and the Financial Regulations and Procedures provide rules for lawful and sound processes for contract and spending decisions. These are managed by the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Regulation Audit and Accounts Committee and supported by a group of officer subject matter experts sitting as the Procurement Board. This provides a single process for procurement planning, compliance with due process and consistency of best practice. Some elements of these will be addressed as part of the 'streamlined decision-making' workstream from the good governance review – the aim being to make aspects of procurement activity simpler and more accessible to officers engaged in commissioning.

16. The Officer Scheme of Delegation is held under regular review by the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer, with any new delegations needing the agreement of the Governance Committee. During 2020/21 the senior management structure has seen greater stability and this has brought notable improvement within Children's Services as a pillar of its improvement programme.
17. Following the appointment of a new Chief Executive in January 2020 an external review of governance was commissioned starting in February, which carried on into 2020/21. This 'good governance' work provides an opportunity to review these areas of strategic governance and action which may be needed to address inconsistencies or ineffectiveness in policy or practice and as part of the Council's culture, including its arrangements for ensuring compliance.
18. In June 2021 the Council notified the Pensions Regulator of a breach of the Teachers' Pension Regulations. This relates to a failure over a number of years to auto-enrol some part time and casual teaching staff onto the teachers' pension scheme as required following a change to the regulations in 2007. The Council has appointed an external adviser to investigate the extent of the breach. Whilst a number of potentially in-scope employees have been identified, work is ongoing to confirm eligibility and calculate backdated benefits and contributions. This will then be communicated to employees in an options letter, detailing benefits accrued (and employee contributions payable) should the member exercise their option to join the scheme. The obligation to the Council only exists should the employee take up this option. As such, no provision for backdated employer contributions or interest charges can currently be made, as existence of the obligation is uncertain and cannot be reliably quantified.

**Principle A (integrity and compliance)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
i. To ensure full implementation of officer interests and gifts	Director L&A
ii. To complete the implementation of agreed workstreams and proposals from the good governance review.	Chief Executive
iii. To review the scheme of delegation as part of the good governance review	Director L&A
iv. To ensure full implementation of the plan to rectify the Teachers Pension Breach.	Director F&SS

## Section B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

### Assured

The County Council exists to serve its residents and is dependent on a wide range of stakeholders for working effectively in partnership. Work is underway in a number of areas to enhance and improve a range of the Council's partnership arrangements.

Consultation and engagement mechanisms are in place and are used effectively.

The County Council has clear decision-making processes and rules and procedures to enforce them which emphasise openness and transparency. This has been tested and shown to be resilient during the pandemic and its impact on ways of working.

Recent changes to improve the scope and focus of partnership working in specified areas, most significantly in relation to joint commissioning with the NHS and in relation to services for children in need and the responsibilities of the Council as corporate parents for children in its care will continue to be developed.

### Decision-making and Scrutiny

19. The **County Council** is the ultimate decision-making body and the principal forum for political debate. All County Council meetings take place in public and are webcast. The County Council sets the strategic aims that form the Policy Framework. It also determines the Council's budget following a well-developed process of member engagement and scrutiny. The form and timing of member engagement in the budget planning process for the 21/22 budget was widely welcomed by members, with all member sessions in July, October and January.
20. The **Executive** takes decisions on most matters of Council policy and service delivery. For the Cabinet, most cabinet level decisions are now being taken collectively. The non-executive responsibilities of the council are discharged through its **non-executive committees** as described in the Scheme of Delegation. The County Council appoints members to **scrutiny committees**, by which the Executive is held to account through member overview and scrutiny. Scrutiny committees are politically proportionate. Chairmen and vice-chairmen are now appointed by the relevant committee. Influential scrutiny is achieved by having significant decisions or proposals previewed. Proposals may also be called in for scrutiny after a decision has been proposed in final form. All Scrutiny meetings take place in public and are webcast. Webcasts are available for up to six years of the County Council meetings and for all of its committees, all of which have been webcast since the beginning of the pandemic.
21. **The Forward Plan** describes all significant (key) decisions planned to be taken in the following four months and is published and updated at least monthly. The Forward Plan is used by Scrutiny Committees to help plan

business. As decisions become more significant in terms of service changes and savings proposals there is a greater need to ensure early awareness by and engagement for all members.

22. Decision-making operates with a presumption of openness. Cabinet and Committees are held in public and individual executive decisions are published on a daily basis on the Council's website. The Council uses an electronic notification system to automatically notify subscribers to meetings or actions by the Council in which they have expressed an interest. Agendas and reports for Cabinet and committee meetings are published at least five clear working days in advance – exceptions are explained in public documents. The use of powers to exempt information from publication or allow a committee to meet in private is minimised to when necessary and only after senior officer authorisation.
23. Decisions and agendas are held on the website for six years. The content management system, Modern.Gov, is the principal method of publishing the Forward Plan, decisions, agendas and minutes. Members and staff now have portable devices which can easily access Modern.gov information. The Constitution also prescribes the rules and constraints around urgent decisions (including those not notified in the Forward Plan) and the form and content of decision reports. This system is not conducive to openness and transparency and its use is kept to a minimum and reported to the next County Council meeting.
24. 2020/21 was a year dominated by the COVID-19 emergency with Council business and democratic processes moving online and with meetings held virtually. This was achieved successfully and the meeting and decision-making arrangements were largely uninterrupted. Local decision making through County Local Committees (CLCs) reverted to informal elected member engagement only. The County Council prioritises transparency and democratic accountability and so Council committees had a full programme of meetings, with only a small number of formal meetings being cancelled at the start of the pandemic. The move to remote working has created the opportunity to develop new approaches, with more virtual briefings for councillors and engaging digitally with stakeholders and witnesses, with learning from this to be built into future ways of working. The Governance Committee has reviewed meeting arrangements at each of its meetings during the year, with a focus on ensuring openness and transparency, as well as managing capacity for meetings.
25. **Communication to the public** is via the Council's website, in public meetings and through social media. The Council's website was last revised in April 2015 and a drive for 'digital by design' (i.e. online services for residents) is being pursued as part of plans for service transformation and re-design to support residents' needs. Public consultation on proposals is addressed below. The extent of progress in the digitization of customer and resident engagement with the Council will need to be monitored.

## Stakeholders and Partnership

26. The County Council works with a range of stakeholders. This includes a range of public bodies, local authorities, the NHS and Sussex Police. Other tiers of local government are important partners in many areas of service delivery, strategic planning and community development. There are both formal and informal forums in place for regular liaison with elected members and senior officers in the district and borough councils, including regular meetings of all of the leaders of the councils (West Sussex Leaders' Board), to discuss issues of common interest and regular meetings of all chief executives (West Sussex Chief Executives Board). The governance and scrutiny route for the council partnership to manage and deliver the retained business rate pool have been settled.
27. Regular meetings with other partners, most notably the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, are held at various levels and between Members and officers on operational, commissioning and service planning. For a number of years the Council has operated a joint service commissioning and pooled budget agreement with the NHS to cover a range of social care and NHS services. Due to expected changes in NHS commissioning plans and a review of Council priorities it is expected that the systems and arrangements for joint commissioning will be reviewed during 2021/22. The terms of reference and membership of the **Health and Wellbeing Board**, the principal forum for health and social care liaison and partnership, have been revised to enhance its role. In addition, a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy was developed to set out the Board's vision and this is being promoted and disseminated within the Council and through various corporate and partnership initiatives.
28. In the area of **Children's Services** the partnership arrangements were noted in 2019 as inadequate and the areas of focus for partnership working largely limited to operational practice. As part of the action arising from the Ofsted Report and subsequent Children's Commissioner Report reviews of children's services are receiving a more effective focus on partnership and joint working. Significant work has been identified and plans for improvement continue to be brought to an Improvement Board chaired by the Children's Commissioner. A comprehensive improvement plan is in place for delivery. Good progress has been made in 2020/21 and in December 2020 the Secretary of State agreed to pause the Children's Trust process, with all responsibility for Children's Services remaining with the County Council.
29. The formal **County Local Committee** meetings were cancelled during 2019/20 due to the pressure on Council business and officer capacity caused by the public health emergency. However, informal engagement was carried out with councillors on business normally carried out by these committees. Innovative ways to engage with local communities through more informal approaches were also explored, including through the use of digital technologies. Plans to replace county local committees with more flexible and informal arrangements, building on learning and experience

from 2019/20 are being developed and a trial model should be ready for the Autumn 2021.

30. The County Council has set out its commitment to working in partnership with residents, businesses, communities, the voluntary and community sector and local authority partners through a number of initiatives. It has a set of partnership principles with the voluntary sector for the commitment to more effective ways of working together, building stronger alliances and empowering joint action. A workstream project commenced as an output of the good governance review to further enhance and clarify the Council's local community and partnership arrangements, led by the Council's Director of Communities.

### **Consultation and engagement in West Sussex**

31. The County Council is committed to working with residents, businesses, communities, service users and partners to help prioritise what it does, to have a say over the approach and to get involved in delivery and change. This requires sound arrangements for engagement and consultation.
32. The Council uses a variety of ways to engage residents and other stakeholders - publications (printed and digital), press releases or social media to keep people informed of plans or decisions. The Council uses various methods to seek people's views: questionnaires, public events, workshops, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, and feedback forms.
33. **Consultation and Engagement Quality Assurance** is a set of processes to ensure services are supported to plan and implement projects which are robust and produce reliable valid data upon which decisions can be made. It includes methodological and ethical requirements and, before projects go live, services must seek advice to ensure they have assurance for consultation and engagement.

### **Formal consultation**

34. Formal consultation will generally only be undertaken where there is a statutory duty or legitimate expectation, and where there is a service or policy need to do so. Consultations are carried out in accordance with current national [Consultation Principles guidance](#), and the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#). Individual services are required to maintain open channels of communications with relevant stakeholder groups and representative bodies where relevant to service planning.
35. All formal public consultations and engagement projects are made accessible online using the 'Your Voice' consultation hub software. They are also published on the County Council's News and Press Release webpages. The Council ensures compliance with the public sector equality duty when processing and securing formal key decisions although consistency and appropriateness of use requires further attention to ensure consistent compliance.

36. The information gathered is analysed and considered as part of the decision-making process, the protocol for which can be found in the [Constitution](#). Analysis reports and decisions are made available on the 'your Voice' engagement hub webpages as a means of closing the 'feedback loop' and increasing trust in decision-making processes.
37. Action was taken to increase the effectiveness of public engagement and communication including the need to raise awareness of the need to comply with new online accessibility legislation. Work on improving understanding of, and compliance with the public sector equality duty has been completed.
38. The County Council has a **Petitions Scheme** describing how petitions from residents are dealt with by the County Council. These enable a petitioner to speak with a cabinet member or at a committee, or to the County Council if prescribed thresholds for signatures are reached. A response is made to each petition, explaining what the County Council will or will not do in response.

### **Governance Review and issues for Assurance**

39. In light of the recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's report of November 2019 a review of the Council's governance, leadership and culture was undertaken. This has taken stock of a number of areas of concern which have implications for the County Council's improvement plans in critical areas of service, including those raised in the inspection report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in 2019 and the recommendations from the 2018 corporate Peer Review. These were built upon by a comprehensive governance review which has led to a number of current projects and workstreams.
40. Actions on these matters are covered in the relevant sections of this Statement with additional commentary as necessary to explain the detail of the area of improvement required. Good progress has continued throughout 2020/21 to make the required improvements.

### **Principle B (openness and engagement)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
i. Implement actions arising from the Good Governance Review	Chief Executive
ii. Implement relevant governance actions on openness, culture and collaborative working from Improvement Plan for FRS	Chief Fire Officer
iii. Implement actions from the Children First Improvement Plan relating to partnership working	Executive Director of Children's Services
iv. Complete project on partnership and community engagement arrangements as part of good governance review	Director of Communities
v. Complete work on equality impact assessment in decision making	DLA
vi. Complete promotion and training linked to revised whistleblowing policy.	DLA

Action	Owner
vii. Implement final proposals and actions from review of scrutiny and learning from good governance review	DLA

### **SECTION C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**

#### **Assured**

The County Council has settled arrangements to define outcomes and monitor performance against agreed measures. These cover the strategic aims for supporting the economy, complement the social value policy of the Council and are built against a theme to address sustainability to support the Council's climate change commitments.

In setting policies and strategies, the County Council takes a long term view of outcomes, taking into account sustainable economic, social and environmental aims and has effective, comprehensive performance monitoring in place.

The corporate document 'Our Council Plan' was prepared and was adopted by the Council at a meeting in February 2021, taking into account both the development of the Council's culture and services through the Good Governance Project and the reprioritisation of services and spending in light of the significant challenges experienced as a result of the public health pandemic. The Plan covers the period 2021-25 and performance will be monitored in a structured, timely and transparent way by both the leadership team and by members in the Executive and through scrutiny.

41. 'Our Council Plan' 2021-2025 outlines the priorities for the County Council and how they are to be assessed in terms of delivery and measures to monitor performance. It was confirmed by the County Council in February 2021 and will be subject to quarterly performance monitoring by both executive and scrutiny members. The Plan was developed by the Cabinet and Executive Leadership Team with the engagement of elected members, scrutiny committees and staff at all levels. Measures and targets were developed and approved as part of the agreed plan and are published on-line as well as being reported and scrutinised in public.
42. The Council Plan is implemented through the Directorate Business Planning process and arrangements for more focused performance reports to Cabinet Members, scrutiny committees and the Executive Leadership Team have been settled. Performance monitoring is undertaken principally through the Performance and Resources Report.
43. **Performance and Resources Report** - Detail of its use and the data monitoring and analysis undertaken by the Council are shown in section D. Active monitoring of performance is undertaken through regular reviews of business plans and with all staff through individual staff performance conversations. These arrangements link to performance and regular reviews of business plans. On a quarterly basis the Cabinet reviews the Performance and Resources Report and it is scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committees. (See also paragraphs 48-49).

44. A review of how well the Council's performance is monitored by members, both executive and scrutiny will be undertaken during the year as the work of performance management is carried out. This is to ensure member have the tools, skills and support to undertake effective performance monitoring and the verification of performance reports and other sources of assurance in the context of agreed priorities.
45. The County Council is committed to championing the economy of the area. One of its priorities is to ensure West Sussex is a prosperous place and for the county to continue to thrive through support businesses. The **Economic Growth Plan**, agreed in June 2018, sets out the County Council's priorities in driving economic growth to support a prosperous place. The Plan covers the period 2018 to 2023 but, in determining which activities and investments to prioritise over the period, a longer-term view of opportunities and challenges is taken. This has become an area of particular focus in relation to the re-setting of priorities in light of the public health emergency and a new **Economic Strategy** has been approved in response to the impact assessment of the emergency.
46. Partners and stakeholders contributed to the development of the Economic Growth Plan, including the district and borough councils, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, the South Downs National Park Authority, further and higher education institutions, and business representative organisations. This has been covered in the rapid work undertaken to develop the new strategy. Working with these partners is crucial in the Council's determination to support the business community and ensure growth for the West Sussex economy and requires further attention to the partnership areas of focus referenced in Section B above.
47. Following the County Council's Notice of Motion on [climate change](#) adopted in April 2019, an ambitious 10 year **climate change strategy** was formulated, with two key aims for the organization to be both carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2030. This was approved during 2020 after member engagement and scrutiny.
48. The internal Climate Change Board was set up to own and oversee delivery on climate change ambition on behalf of the Executive Leadership Team. The governance around the Board was audited for effectiveness in spring 2021 and was rated as 'Reasonable.'
49. The creation of [Our Council Plan](#) (2021-2025) is underpinned by the ambitions of the Council in responding to the challenges of climate change. All Directorates have been tasked to reflect this ambition in their 2021-22 Business Plans, to embed the ownership of climate change activity across the organisation. Quarterly reporting to Cabinet and monthly management reporting (internal) will highlight progress on key climate change indicators.
50. The Council has a **Social Value Policy** which identifies and explains the benefits of ensuring that policies, business plans and service procurements consider and address their impact upon local communities, the local economy, the lives of residents and the places of the County. The policy was first developed in 2015 and has been incorporated into

procurement practice and processes, any impact being recorded in published decision reports.

**Principle C (defining outcomes and benefits)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
i. Complete arrangements for monitoring and reporting corporate performance relating to Our Council Plan priorities	Chief Executive
ii. Implement plans for member roles in performance management arrangements	DLA & Chief Financial Officer
iii. Completion of governance for climate change strategy	Director of Environment & Public Protection
iv. Develop arrangements for reporting and monitoring output from the new Economic Strategy	Executive Director Place

## **SECTION D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

### **Assured**

Sections D and E should be read together with particular reference to the governance challenges raised by the various reviews and external service inspection reports on which much progress has continued to be made during 2020/21.

Interventions for improvement in relation to Children's Services and the Fire and Rescue Service have continued to be a particular focus aligned with the challenge to address capacity and capability in these service areas and in other critical areas of the County Council. Significant progress has been made and follow-up inspections have been positive in confirming that the County Council is improving, while still needing to improve further.

The County Council takes decisions on interventions based on the priorities agreed in 'Our Council Plan'. In areas identified for improvement systems for governance, oversight and scrutiny of interventions will continue to be given particular focus. These include the continuing improvement journeys for Children's Services and also for the Fire and Rescue Service. Proposed interventions are recorded through Directorate Business Plans for timely outcome delivery, overseen by the Management Team.

51. All Directorates are expected to prepare and monitor Business Plans which set out the actions required to meet the outcomes set in the Our Council Plan and the targets measures and milestones used to monitor their delivery. These are in place and will be reviewed regularly and will be updated and refreshed as needed.
52. The public facing **Performance Dashboard** provides details on progress on the key indicators of the 'Our Council Plan'. This is underpinned by the business assurance framework which, together with the corporate performance dashboard provide assurance that the Council's priorities are implemented. The Cabinet reviews the performance dashboard as part of the Performance and Resources report and it is scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committees.
53. The **Performance and Resources Report** provides an overview of performance against the agreed priorities within Our Council Plan and tracks financial performance to ensure intended outcomes are kept in focus and expenditure controlled. The Performance and Resources Report focuses on the delivery of:
  - Our Council Plan and Performance Measures
  - Medium Financial Term Strategy and in-year budget
  - Culture and Workforce
  - Service and Corporate Improvement
  - Corporate Risk Management
54. Executive (member or officer) **decision reports** provide the public record of all significant decisions to implement service plans and spend. They are required to show the intended outcomes, the rationale for the proposal,

implications for Council resources, other options considered, advice received and consultation undertaken and how risks are managed.

55. The Executive is supported by a number of officer boards chaired by senior officers to ensure oversight of strategic areas of Council business on behalf of the Executive Leadership Team. These boards co-ordinate subject matter expertise as well as overseeing arrangements for the delivery of priorities at an officer level prior to member consideration. They comprise a board to oversee capital programme planning, the climate change strategy and one for strategic procurement.
56. Additional action is underway as part of the project for streamlined decision making (good governance) to clarify the governance of these Boards and their fit within the Scheme of Delegation and how they interact so as to provide greater understanding of their purpose and output for both officers and members and to ensure their effectiveness in delivering corporate aims in a timely and transparent way.
57. Ofsted has continued to carry out regular inspections of the Council's Children's Services following the critical findings in its report in early 2019. The output from these inspections inform the continued improvement interventions for the service. The Department for Education's and appointment of a Commissioner to report on the County Council's capacity and capability to improve remains. The Commissioner's most recent reports record continued improvement and this led to the decision by the Department to pause any direction for the Council to establish a Children's Trust – showing significant confidence in the governance and corporate commitments to sustained improvement.
58. The implementation of the improvement plan adopted following the inspection of the Council's Fire and Rescue Service by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (report published on 20th June 2019) has been recognised as showing sustained success. Regular member updates to full Council, Cabinet and scrutiny on improvement activity are taking place. External oversight of the work on governance was lifted in light of the significant improvements recorded.

#### **Principle D (interventions for outcomes)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
i. Children's Improvement Plan implementation	DCS
ii. Fire and Rescue Improvement Plan implementation	CFO
iii. Implementation of new corporate performance and business planning processes against the Council Plan	Chief Executive
iv. Review of Officer executive Boards governance	DLA
v. Review of capital governance arrangements	DLA & Dof F&SS

**SECTION E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

**Assured**

There have been continued actions taken in 2020/21 in areas related to leadership to reinforce service improvement in Fire and Rescue Service and Children's Services and the overall assurance for corporate capability and capacity to improve.

Officers and members are expected to have a clear sense of their purpose, roles and responsibilities in line with the Council's vision and the suite of policies and processes which support it. This has been reinforced by the work on the West Sussex Plan and the business planning activity underpinning its delivery.

The Chief Executive and the Executive Leadership Team manage the County Council's workforce, skills and resource planning. All officers are expected to have their performance monitored and their development needs identified and addressed. Specific attention is paid to programmes for leadership development. Recent reviews of the aims and form of delivery have been implemented. Work continues to enable the Council's leaders to promote a positive and supportive culture and to provide the means of enhancing or reinforcing good leadership skills.

A system is in place to ensure that all elected members have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities when appointed or elected to particular positions within the Council. Members are expected to be able to fulfil the expectations and demands of their roles as local member and those to which they may be appointed. Members are also expected to meet the expectations for development, knowledge and awareness as set by the Council's Member Development Group. Areas of focus for review are identified. Significant training and support has been given to members to help them to focus on the strategic nature of their roles. This has been a particular focus of attention in the preparation for the Council election in May 2021 and the induction of members following the election.

59. Arrangements for the County Council's member appointments to specific roles are open and set out in the Constitution. The Council elects the Leader who decides the composition and responsibilities of the Cabinet. The Council makes appointments to all committees. Changes can be made at each Council meeting. All terms of reference are published. There is a system for reviewing and refreshing all constitutional terms of reference for committees and boards which transact Council business.
60. **Member roles** – Executive and non-executive roles are defined and published within the Constitution on the Council's website and as part of the Members' Information Network database (the Mine). The member induction and training programmes cover these. All member development sessions have attendance and feedback recorded.
61. The knowledge and development needs of members are identified and addressed through a cross-party **Member Development Group** (MDG). This group reports to the Governance Committee and oversees the

delivery of a planned programme of development to meet member training needs, taking into account members' views on priorities through surveys and feedback. It reviews the impact of member development work and identifies areas for improvement. Its reports and proposals are published as part of the Governance Committee's business.

62. MDG has recently addressed the strategy for member development and has led on work to achieve Charter status for the council's member development programme. The application for Charter status was granted by South East Employers in November 2020 following an external assessment process. Overall, the assessment concluded that there is an impressive commitment and passion for learning throughout West Sussex county Council, that there is a clear Councillor Development Strategy and the learning programme supports the Council's agreed priorities. A key requirement of the Charter is that all members should complete a Training needs Assessment, a specific training plan to identify their individual development needs and to record when this has been completed. These are all in place.
63. A full induction programme was designed and agreed in planning for the May 2021 elections. This covered members' strategic and local community roles, scrutiny skills, as well as specific training on the Code of Conduct, safeguarding and corporate parenting. More tailored induction is provided for members in specialist roles, including new members of the Executive and of Planning Committee, Pensions Panel and the Staff Appeals Panel.
64. Specialist training is given to members according to the roles they carry out. This includes training for Cabinet Members (the executive), scrutiny, members of the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, Planning Committee, Rights of Way Committee and the Pensions Panel and Staff Appeals Panel. Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) remain part of the induction of new members following the May 2021 election. Enhanced DBS checks are carried out for members in adults and children's services related roles. Training on adults and children's safeguarding is being provided for all members, with an online training module also available. Training was also provided to ensure awareness of data protection and IT security responsibilities.
65. In 2020/21, support and advice has been provided to members to ensure more measurable impact of service performance oversight and purposeful scrutiny. This has been informed by the learning and experience of the approach to performance management by the establishment of a new Fire and Rescue Services Scrutiny Committee, which first met in June 2020. All members were also closely involved in the development of the Council's corporate plan and the design of its performance measures.
66. During 2020/21 the MDG led work to promote local democracy as part of a three-year programme leading up to the May 2021 elections. This programme focused on the provision of information to people thinking of standing for election; an exploration of the barriers to people standing for election and ways to address these; a review of councillor roles; promotions of the role of county councillors and the Council to the wide

public; and a programme of engagement with the West Sussex Youth Cabinet. A key element of this programme was the 'Be A Councillor' project, that led to a website and events aimed at encouraging people from diverse backgrounds to stand for election in 2021. This also sought to raise awareness of the opportunities and requirements of the role, so that those elected would have a good understanding in advance.

67. The MDG also led on the development of a comprehensive induction programme for councillors for after the May 2021, to be predominately delivered on virtual platforms due to the public health pandemic. This induction programme was based on a set of principles agreed by the Governance Committee which sought to ensure a first class member-led programme which takes a phased and balanced approach to ensure all members have the training, information and support they need.

## **Officers**

68. Statutory roles include the designation of the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service, the Director of Law and Assurance as the Monitoring Officer, and the Director of Finance and Support Services as Chief Financial Officer. Other critical statutory and leadership roles and their responsibilities are described in the Council's scheme of delegation. These include the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Learning and the Executive Director of Adults' and Health. All Directors and Executive Directors are required formally each year to give assurance as to their compliance and that of their Service with a range of requirements and expectations of them as senior leaders within the Council. This was not completed across the entire leadership team during a period of disruption in 2020 but will be restored for future Governance Assurance statements.
69. There has been greater stability in the Executive Leadership Team since the start of the Good Governance project. The Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer have a place on the Executive Leadership Team, which comprises the three executive directors in addition to the Chief Executive, Director of HR and Organisational Development and the Chief Fire Officer. The Director of Public Health who reports to the Executive Director for Adults' and Health regularly attends ELT to ensure public health is embedded across the County Council and its partnerships. Leadership by this group has also been required for the Council's response to the continuing public health emergency during 2020/21. Established emergency resilience processes and systems were deployed and have been used effectively to ensure sound and clear management of the Council's responsibilities.
70. All levels of management within the Council have a designated role profile and these profiles are accessible via the Council's intranet (the Point). Officers are given copies of their roles on appointment and are supported through induction training, their personal development review and supervision in understanding and developing their roles. Internally published HR procedures cover all aspects of performance and procedure to support managers.

71. Personal development priorities are agreed through a personal development review process. There is an established programme of induction training for new staff. Training is available increasingly through an online learning system and mandatory annual refresher online training is heavily promoted to all staff. Leadership skills and development for senior officers has been addressed as part of the development of the workforce strategy (the People Framework) led by the interim Director of Human Resources.
72. Issues of capacity and service resilience to ensure service effectiveness are covered through workforce planning as part of directorate business planning. This has been thoroughly refreshed as part of the development in 2020/21 of the West Sussex Plan. Areas of particular risk are identified. Specific attention has been required over recent years to manage challenges in adults' and children's social care where both recruitment and retention have been problematic with expected adverse impact on service quality and consistency. Action to address these issues remains an area of particular focus. A broader workforce strategy has now been put in place.

### **Principle E (capacity and leadership)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
i. leadership skill development	D of HR & OD
ii. People Framework roll out and implementation	D of HR & OD
iii. member skills development following good governance review and scrutiny review	DLA
iv. Complete delivery of programme for member skills and knowledge post May 2021 election	DLA

### **SECTION F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

#### **Assured**

Risk management is robust overall and risks are being considered during business planning and decision-making processes, corporately and across all services. This has recently been refreshed as part of the new business planning process adopted alongside Our Council Plan.

Service and corporate performance management has been addressed in earlier sections of the report in the context of the comprehensive review of performance during 2020/21 as part of the development of the new Council Plan.

The County Council has robust internal financial controls in place, displays strong public financial management and operates systems to manage risks and performance in the most effective manner.

Health and Safety is the focus of a recent and ongoing review to ensure improved systems and compliance.

73. The Constitution sets out the rules to ensure robust internal control over the Council's finances. The system and arrangements for financial performance management and budget monitoring demonstrate sound

internal monitoring and control and have formal and well published arrangements for member and officer oversight and transparency.

74. The system of internal financial control is based upon a framework of comprehensive financial regulations and procedures which comply with the CIPFA "Good Practice Guide for Financial Regulations in a modern English Council". Control is maintained through regular management information, supervision, and a structure of delegation and accountability. External audit of the Council's accounts in 2019/20 concluded that arrangements remained robust, but a qualification was delivered on a value for money conclusion on an 'except for' basis, relating to arrangements for informed decision-making. The audit for 2020/21 is in the process of being concluded so the opinion has not yet been given. The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA 'Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government 2010.' A continuous review is maintained. A full review of Financial Regulations and Procedures was undertaken and a new version of Financial Regulations was approved in 2018. A further review is planned during 2021/22 as part of the Smartcore project.
75. Each Director is required to conduct a full review of internal governance systems for their area of responsibility, through an assurance mapping process. The statements made, based on the assurance mapping, are checked to identify Council-wide governance issues. Evidence of assurance given is supplemented in the Annual Assurance Statement for each directorate. These include actions for improvement. From both sources, significant governance implications are included in the Statement's action plan (this document). It is expected that, with a more settled leadership team, this task will be completed in a more timely and comprehensive way this year than in recent years.
76. The officer scheme of delegation is critical for the effectiveness of controls of spending and performance. It is kept under review by the Director of Law and Assurance. Directors are required to ensure and confirm the effectiveness of the scheme of officer onward delegation and have worked with the Director of Law and Assurance to ensure that there is shared understanding of the operation of delegations and the need to continually review them. This does however remain an area for further action and is planned as part of the streamlined decision-making project arising from the good governance review. Areas of action for greater clarity and assurance in relation to officer delegations are identified elsewhere in this report.
77. The County Council annually reviews the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review is informed by the Head of Internal Audit's annual report 2020/21, by the external auditor and other agencies and inspectorates. These findings are brought together within this document and are reported annually to the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee. The Director of Law and Assurance is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the internal assurance arrangements and the implementation of actions identified by those arrangements. The Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee

undertakes the functions of an audit committee. This includes review of the work and findings of Internal Audit. The audit arrangements which support and reinforce financial controls and assurance are fully addressed in section G below.

78. The **Risk Management Strategy** is set out in the Constitution (Part 4 section 2) and describes the allocation of responsibilities between officers and elected members. It also summarises the system the Council has for identifying, managing and categorising corporate risk. The operation of the scheme and concerns arising are reported quarterly to the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee as part of the system for reporting on the effectiveness of risk management arrangements. That Committee is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements. This also forms part of the Performance and Resources Report reported to Cabinet and the Executive Leadership Team and scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committees.
79. There is a separate requirement for material risks connected with proposals, policies and spending decisions to be formally identified with actions taken to manage such risks in all recorded and published decision reports (see paragraph 50 above). The arrangements for managing corporate risk include clarity on the role of the executive leadership is monitoring and taking responsibility for risk and in ensuring that the Cabinet are advised and updated on risk. The responsibility for being assured about the effective management of risk is also made clear in reports to scrutiny committees in relation to proposals and policies presented for scrutiny.
80. Risk management is delivered through robust directorate controls including the business planning process, supported by the Corporate Risk Register. The s.151 Officer who carries the operational officer responsibility for risk management. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Council for the effectiveness of the risk strategy.
81. The area of Health and Safety management and the corporate assurance arrangements for good Health and Safety policy and practice has been the subject of a significant review in the context of sound risk management and internal governance arrangements are now working well.

**Principle F (risk and performance)**

Action	Owner
i. Finalise review and plans for corporate risk register oversight and monitoring in light of performance management changes.	D of F&SS
ii. Refresh compliance and consistency in scheme of onward delegation from Directors	DLA

## **SECTION G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability**

### **Assured**

The County Council has transparent processes in place through publication of the Forward Plan of key decisions, of agendas and reports of its meetings and those of its committees. This includes key decision reports on the website and the prominence given to reporting and enforcing of audit recommendations through the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee which meets in public.

The County Council has effective open data reporting arrangements to ensure the accessibility of significant spend, contractual and other data relevant to financial performance. This has also been addressed through the development of the performance management reporting arrangements linked to the implementation of Our Council Plan.

82. All meetings of the Council and of the committees which discharge executive, non-executive or scrutiny functions take place in public and have their reports and minutes published on the Council's website. Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Committee decisions, agendas and reports are published on the website and are available to the press and public. This is driven by the publication of the Forward Plan of key decisions. A limited number of reports are considered in private session only when the subject meets the prescribed criteria. A summary of these is published and the rationale for non-disclosure made available.
83. The County Council has several separate bodies of which it is a part, which in 2020/21 included the LEP Joint Committee, the Local Government Pension Scheme ACCESS Joint Committee and the Sussex Police and Crime Panel. Each of these bodies abide by the Nolan principles and publish their agendas and minutes in an accessible place, which are linked from the County Council's website.

### **Review and Audit**

84. The Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee undertakes the functions of an audit committee. This includes review of the findings of Internal Audit. The Committee meets regularly and in public and holds officers to account for the timely implementation of audit recommendations.
85. Internal Audit provides an annual assurance opinion based on their delivery of a risk based internal audit plan. This includes adherence to established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. These are reported to the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee. The overall opinion for 2020/21 is 'reasonable'.
86. The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Director of Finance and Support Services. He also has direct access to the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and other directors and has well-established reporting lines to members through the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee and quarterly to the Executive Leadership Team. Internal Audit is provided

through an arrangement with Hampshire County Council, giving greater independence, resilience and capacity for this function.

87. Specific issues of performance or effectiveness in particular areas of critical service delivery or council governance have been raised during the year's internal audit work and have been summarised in the annual audit report. This includes areas where limited or no assurance has been given. To the extent that the findings and recommendations are relevant to matters not otherwise covered in this Statement they are set out here and captured as part of the action plan to ensure alignment with the actions addressing issues of governance and internal process.
88. The Internal Audit annual report highlights specifically those areas where a limited assurance review has been issued, which link to areas identified in this Statement:
- Omissions in process (compliance) in the 'Management of Restructures' review
  - The absence of effective governance in the 'S75 Governance' review

#### **Principle G (transparency audit and accountability)**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>
i. Internal audit recommendations for governance	Director of Law and Assurance

#### **Main Governance Issues for action or to note**

89. In formulating this year's AGS a number of forms of evidence have been reviewed. Several of these are reported and monitored through the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee. The main governance issues requiring attention are summarised at the end of each section as set out above.
90. An action plan is attached at part of the Appendix (final column), which sets out how the Council will address governance issues in the year ahead. We are satisfied that these actions will deliver the improvements necessary and we will continue to monitor, evaluate and report on progress as part of our next annual review.

**Paul Marshall Leader of the Council September 2021**

**Becky Shaw Chief Executive September 2021**

## Annexe - Sources of Assurance and Actions

### Key:

CIPFA = The Chartered Institute of Public Financing & Accounting

FSS = Finance and Support Services

HR&OD = Human Resources & Organisational Development

L&A = Law and Assurance

MDG = Member Development Group

RAAC = Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee

SOLACE = Society of Local Authority Chief Executives

### Table of assurance for Principle A: Integrity and Compliance

Source of assurance	Where found	Who is responsible	Role	last review/ action planned*
Constitution	Web and Intranet	Governance Committee and Director L&A	A single source for rules and procedure for lawful sound business and meeting management.	A review was undertaken in 2021 arising from the Good Governance project and was approved by the County Council in July 2021
Codes of Conduct	Constitution	Standards Committee & Director L&A	Defines standards of behaviour and how to enforce	Minor changes were approved by the County Council in July 2021.
Whistleblowing Policy	Constitution	Standards Committee & Director L&A	Defines process to report breaches of rules or standards confidentially	Fully revised for approval by Governance Committee June 2020. Continuing Action to promote and monitor*.
Anti-fraud and corruption strategy	Intranet	RAAC & Director F&SS	Statutory obligations recorded and enforced	November 2015. Reviewed every 3 to 5 years. Review planned for 2021/2*.
Anti-bribery policy	Intranet	Director L&A	Statutory obligations recorded and enforced	November 2015. Reviewed every 3 to 5 years. Review planned for 2021/2*.
Register of Member Interests	Website	Director L&A	Statutory list of interests.	Entries updated on an on-going basis. Regular reminders to members to review. A revised form in line with best practice and accessibility is in use following the May 2021 election.
Register of Officer Interests	Website	Director L&A	Record of financial and conflicting business interests	New system from March 2017 to be further refreshed and reinforced in 2021*.
Corporate Complaints Policy	Website	Chief Executive & Standards Committee	Describes mechanism for handling all complaints.	Complete system review completed 2017/18. A new annual report on complaints was provided for Standards Committee in Summer 2020.
Staff Discipline policy	Intranet	Director HR&OD	Defines rules of conduct and procedures to manage	New HR policies to achieve single framework established in 2019.
Data Protection Policy	Intranet	Director L&A	Defines rules and procedures to protect data.	Revised for the new law 2018. Review of practice and training to mitigate risk completed and revised guidance and training in place.
Freedom of Information policy	Intranet	Director L&A Director of Communities	Defines rules and procedures	January 2018. No action planned
Data Security & Accepted Use Policy	Intranet	Director F&SS	Defines rules and procedures	September 2014 Mandatory annual refresher training. No action planned

Source of assurance	Where found	Who is responsible	Role	last review/ action planned*
Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts	Constitution	Director L&A and RAAC	To prescribe the rules for all contracts and procurement activity	Revision took place in 2021 in light of the withdrawal from the European Union. More recent revisions to manage growth in emergency procurement linked to pandemic affected commissioning.
Procurement Board (officers)	Intranet	Director F&SS	To manage and plan strategic procurement	Procurement Pipeline and systems for monitoring in place. Action to clarify internal governance between officer boards within Good Governance underway*.

### Table of Assurance for Principle B: Openness and Stakeholders

Source of assurance	Where found	Who is responsible	Role	last reviewed/ action planned*
Scheme of Delegation	Constitution	Governance Committee & Director L&A	To fully define who takes what decisions and how and how recorded.	December 2019. Action required to clarify officer onward delegations and in context of senior officer boards within Good Governance Underway as streamlined decision making workstream*.
Forward Plan	Web site	Director L&A	Describes planned key decisions for next 4 months	Revised format 2021 implemented.
Protocol on decision making	Constitution	Director L&A	Describes arrangements for sound decisions.	Reviewed with Constitution July 2018. Will refresh in 2021 as part of streamlined decision making workstream*.
Scrutiny Committee business planning	Scrutiny Committee reports	Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee, Scrutiny Manager	Records planned scrutiny work.	Continuous with annual work programme published. Revised in 2021 to give oversight to individual scrutiny committees. Further scrutiny review planned 2021/22*.
Openness and access to meetings/ decisions.	Constitution and Website	Director L&A	Describes rules and process for ensuring transparency of business.	Constitution revised 2018. Web casting of meetings extended to all formal meetings in 2020. To be reviewed September 2021*.
Consultations & community liaison forums	Intranet, Website & Press releases	Head of Communications & Engagement	Communication to public	New community liaison channels are being explored in 2021 with learning from pandemic response
Consultation Q&A system	Intranet	Chief Executive	Provide system and guidance for service consultation	Review in 2015. Review of Statement of Community Involvement in 2018. No action planned
Partnership meetings, briefings and liaison	Held by relevant directorate	Relevant Director	Communication to partners	Continuous review and proposal to track external engagement plans better. Partner engagement review within Good Governance underway*.
Equality Policy	Website And decision making protocol	Chief Executive. Relevant Director (for decisions) Director of HR (for staff)	Source of guidance for ensuring compliance with public sector equality duty	Policy partly reviewed 2018. Further and fuller review required*. Respect and Dignity at Work policy rolled out first half of 2021.

<b>Source of assurance</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>last reviewed/ action planned*</b>
Health and Wellbeing Board arrangements	Constitution	Director of PH	Forum for strategic joint business and service oversight	Complete review of Board 2018 – 19 & new H&W strategy from April 2019.
West Sussex Compact and Partnership Principles	Website	Director of Communities	Communication to partners	Partnership principles refreshed in 2018. Established partnership working with district and borough councils. Being reviewed as part of good governance in partnerships project*.

### **Table of Assurance for Principle C: Sustainability**

<b>Source of assurance</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>last reviewed/ action planned*</b>
Our Council Plan	Website	Cabinet & Chief Executive	Describes the measure and targets for key corporate & service aims	The County Council agreed current Plan in February 2021. Quarterly reports to members and annual Reports to Council.
Social Value Policy	Website	Director of F&SS	Sets aims for social economic and community benefits of council business	Full review in procurement activity completed 2019.
Climate Change Strategy	Website	Director of E&PP	Sets Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2030	The Strategy approved 2020.

### **Sources of Assurance for Principle D: Optimising Interventions**

<b>Source of assurance</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>last reviewed/ action planned*</b>
Performance and Resources Report	website	Chief Executive & Cabinet and Director F&SS	Reviews financial and operational performance	Reviewed 2020. Newly introduced in 2021.
Executive Decisions process	Website	Director of L&A	To record rationale, legality and financial compliance of decisions.	Format revised 2018. New publication system by Modern.gov 2018.
Business Plans	Share Point	All Directors	Record of actions and objectives for delivery of Our Council Plan	Annual. Action taken to ensure better coordination of plans between Directorates implemented as part of Our Council Plan.
Executive Officer Boards	Intranet	Executive Leadership Team	Manage strategic business delegated to officers	Action underway as good governance workstream to clarify scope of officer delegations and ensure more transparency*
Capital Programme Governance	Constitution	Executive Director Place and Director F&SS	Provide sound systems for capital programme	Revision February 2019. Further review on planned programme re-set as part of good governance*.
Service Improvement plans governance and assurance	Records of decisions and Improvement Board agendas.	Executive Director CS & CFO	Provide plan and assurance for delivery of improvements from external inspection.	Arrangements for monitoring and scrutinising effectiveness of plans ongoing

## Sources of Assurance for Principle E: Leadership Capability

Source of assurance	Where found	Who is responsible	Role	last reviewed/action planned
Scheme of delegation	Constitution	Governance Committee Chief Executive Director L&A	Formal allocation of key roles and functions, including Statutory and senior officers	April 2019 with minor revisions in December 2019. Actions identified above for clarity for officer boards and onward delegation schemes generally*.
Budget, including medium term financial strategy	Council agenda	County Council Executive Director Resource Services & Director F&SS	To agree a sound budget and financial strategy.	February 2021
Member Development Programme	Held by Director L&A Member Information Database	Governance Committee & Director L&A & MDG	Plan and record all member training.	Continually by MDG (sub-group of Governance). Reports regularly and uses member feedback. Will review any action needed in autumn 2021 following induction from May 2021*.
Human Resources policies	Intranet	Director HR&OD	Describe all officer duties, rules and requirements.	Review planned within Good Governance as culture and leadership areas People Framework and respect and dignity at work policy in place.
Workforce Planning arrangements	HR policies and Directorate plans	Relevant Director	Provides rationale and scheme for ensuring resilience and capacity.	Particular focus on service improvement plans. People Framework completed 2021.
Staff role profiles	Intranet	Heads of Service	Describe all officer roles	Updated as roles change.
Member Induction Programme	Intranet	Member Development Group Director L&A	To determine the content of the programme	Plans completed in 2020, for induction programme for post May 2021.
Specialist Member training	Committee business programme	Director L&A	Non-executive committees and appeals panel	Completed after 2021 election including individual member training needs analysis for all members.
Officer Performance management	Intranet	Director HR&OD & all Directors for delivery	To manage performance and development	Review undertaken 2021 in line with the Good Governance review.
Performance Management Policy	Intranet	Director HR&OD	clear system for addressing poor performance	As above.

## Sources of Assurance for Principle F: Risk and Performance

Source of assurance	Where found	Who is responsible	Role	last reviewed/action planned
Governance Statement	RAAC agenda	RAAC Director L&A	Captures all sources of governance assurance	Annual (this document)
Assurance mapping	N/A	Director L&A Director F&SS	Internal checklist for service governance	New checklist was refreshed in 2020.
Local Code of Corporate Governance	Governance agenda	Governance Committee Director L&A	To confirm the corporate governance principles in place	Aim as output from Good Governance streamlined decision making workstream*.

<b>Source of assurance</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>last reviewed/action planned</b>
Risk Management Strategy	Constitution	Chief Executive	Strategic aims and objectives for corporate risk management	Approved by RAAC 2018. No action planned. Better clarification on risk roles for members added to Constitution in July 2021.
Risk Management systems	RAAC agenda	Director F&SS	Operational systems for meeting RM strategy aims	Last review 2018. Action since for systems for risk management to be more consistent.
Health and Safety Policy	Intranet	Director of HR &OC	Provides rules, procedures and systems for assurance in relation to health and safety at work and in relation to property risk.	Internal review 2018 has led to revised governance.
Audit Function	Constitution	RAAC Director F&SS	To manage and ensure the effectiveness of Audit.	Annual internal quality review. External review is required every five years. Internal Audit service re-procured 2018
Performance and Resources Report	Website	Chief Executive & Director F&SS	Reviews financial and operational performance	Revised 2020. No action planned
Treasury Management Strategy	Council agenda	Director F&SS	For sound strategy to limit risks to borrowings and investments.	Reviewed and updated by Council February 2021.
Financial Regulations and Procedures	Constitution	Director of F&SS RAAC	To prescribe the rules for all financial transactions	New version agreed by RAAC July 2018. To be reviewed as part of Smartcore project in 2021/22
Resilience and Emergency arrangements	Intranet	Chief Fire Officer	To provide safe systems and procedures to manage local and civil emergencies	Action plan implemented. Will review post Covid*.

### **Sources of Assurance for Principle G: Audit and Transparency**

<b>Source of assurance</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>last reviewed/action planned*</b>
Audit Function	Constitution	RAAC Director F&SS	To manage and ensure the effectiveness of Audit.	Annual internal quality review completed 2020/21 Procurement of external auditor is required every five years and was last undertaken in 2018/19.
External Audit of Accounts	Audit Report	RAAC and Director of F&SS	To give external assurance to the quality of the Council's accounts and accounting practice	Assurance given to 19/20 accounts with one value for money qualification on an 'except for' basis. The 2020/21 audit is in the process of being concluded so the opinion has not yet been given.