Annual governance statement



better for customers and better for business



Scope of responsibility	1
The purpose of the governance framework	1
Council plan	3
Complaints	4
Transformation	4
Financial framework	5
Communications	6
Risk management	7
Audit committee	8
Member and senior officer development	9
Head of paid service	10
Review of effectiveness	11
	and the same of th
	W.Yes

Scope of responsibility

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

In discharging this overall responsibility, the council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. This statement explains how the council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, regulation 6 (b) which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of council policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government identifies six core principles. These are: -

- Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
- Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
- Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

These principles are outlined in the council's Local Code of Corporate Governance. To support the six principles, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) have identified key elements of the typical systems and processes that comprise an authority's governance arrangements. These are: -

- identifying and communicating the authority's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users
- reviewing the authority's vision and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements
- translating the vision into objectives for the authority and its partnerships
- measuring the quality of services for users, for ensuring they are delivered in accordance with the authority's objectives and for ensuring that they represent the best use of resources and value for money
- defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the executive, nonexecutive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication in respect of the authority and partnership arrangements
- developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for members and staff
- reviewing the effectiveness of the authority's decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, decision making in partnerships and robustness of data quality
- reviewing the effectiveness of the framework for identifying and managing risks and demonstrating clear accountability
- ensuring effective counter-fraud and anticorruption arrangements are developed and

maintained

- ensuring effective management of change and transformation
- ensuring the authority's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact
- ensuring the authority's assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact
- ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the monitoring officer function and the head of paid service function
- undertaking the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities
- ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful
- whistleblowing and complaints framework is in place
- identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training
- establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation
- enhancing the accountability for service delivery and effectiveness of other public service providers

 incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working and reflecting these in the authority's overall governance arrangements

The council's governance framework

The governance framework has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2016 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts. An overview of the council's assurance framework is shown in diagram 1. The key elements of the framework which were in place for the period are detailed below: -

Council Plan

The Council Plan (2012-16) was approved on 15 May 2012. The plan is a live document and this is demonstrated through its annual refresh. The Council Plan, Year 4 refresh, was approved on 14 April 2015 and reaffirmed the council's vision, five priority themes and key objectives.

We are a council that has a vision for the Borough as 'a place where a good quality of life is open to all' and also sets out the values which we hold as we work towards the vision. We are a council which puts its customers first, is positive about working with others and one which values its employees. In delivering the vision, the council will:

- Use resources efficiently and effectively
- Promote economic development
- Improve recycling and care for the environment

- Provide customer focussed community support
- Develop housing relevant to local needs

Each priority theme is supported by a number of objectives and key operational actions and delivery of these is monitored through our performance management framework.

The current council plan (2012-2016) expired on 31 March 2016. A new plan (2016-2020) was developed during the year and this culminated in a new set of priorities. These were approved by Council on April 19 2016. They are;

- Finance and resources
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Customer focussed services

Performance Management

Delivery of the council plan is monitored through a performance tracker. Supporting the tracker is a set of key performance indicators (KPI) and key financial monitoring information. The KPI are broadly aligned to our council plan priorities. All performance information is reported on a quarterly basis to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. By way of further challenge, the committee's comments and observations are reported to the Executive Committee by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and action taken where necessary.

With regards to services, each service group produces an annual service plan. The delivery of service plan actions forms part of normal business through management dialogue, one to one meetings and Lead Member briefings. At an individual level there is the Personal and

to deliver its depot services."

Professional Development framework supported with a behaviours framework where individual performance and development can be monitored.

As reported in last year's AGS, in November 2014 the council was subject to a corporate peer challenge. This was facilitated by the Local Government Association (LGA) and included a review of the council's governance arrangements, financial sustainability, leadership, capacity and resources and delivery of the council's transformation programme. The feedback received was extremely positive. To further improve performance, recommendations made were consolidated within an action plan. This was approved by Council on 14 April 2015 and progress in delivering this plan is monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Complaints

An audit of the complaints framework was undertaken during the year and concluded that although the number of complaints received are low, improvements to the framework were required. This resulted in a complete overhaul of the framework culminating in a new complaints policy being approved at Executive Committee on 6 April 2016. The policy is supported with a new online reporting and monitoring system which makes it much easier for our customers to contact us and allows us to manage complaints more effectively.

All complaints received, including those received by the Local Government Ombudsman are reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis. Complaints are low in number; only 24 formal complaints were received for the period January to December 2015. With regards to LGO complaints, only 5 complaints were received.

Transformation

The Transform Programme is in its third year and outcomes achieved reflect the different approaches used to reduce costs and increase efficiency and quality of service. A mixed approach has been taken to transform the way services are delivered but at the heart is a commitment that whatever approach we take will be 'better for customers, better for business'.

In April 2015, the Council joined the local authority owned company, Ubico Ltd to deliver its depot services. This has secured the future of these services, saved significant costs and provided a platform to share resources with others to reduce future financial pressures.

The build of the new leisure centre has been a significant transformational project and opened on 30 May 2016. Run by a management company, Places for People, this will provide an income of £140k per annum. This also eliminates the subsidy of £200k per annum on our current ageing facility, Cascades which has closed and will be demolished.

As a result of Cascades being demolished, this provides the opportunity of an exciting and again significant transformational project around the redevelopment of the town centre Spring Gardens/Oldbury Road sites. This is at an early stage with Council approving on 6 April 2016 the broad redevelopment proposals for the sites.

In terms of service delivery, the service review of the Revenues and Benefits service which was completed in 2014/15 continues to demonstrate ongoing improvement in 2015/16. Processing times for claims are at a record low and performance is top quartile nationally. The project has also freed up capacity to start work, in partnership with our

Public Service Centre (PSC) partners on broader financial inclusion work.

We continue to build on the success of the PSC. The co-location has enabled partner agencies to work together to find effective solutions for local residents in a more holistic and joined up manner. The PSC includes front line staff from the following public sector agencies; Children's and Young People services from Gloucestershire County Council, the integrated health and adult social care functions run by Gloucestershire Care Services, Tewkesbury Borough Police, Department of Work and Pensions' Job Centre, the community team from the Fire and Rescue Service, the Citizens Advice Bureau and two of our local Registered Housing Providers. By attracting partners into the building, this has also created a new income stream, approximately £166K per annum. We will look to build upon this during 2016/17. Next steps include attracting new partners into the PSC, by letting the second floor. This will generate an additional estimated income of £75k per annum.

The council has demonstrated through the delivery of the Transform Programme, it is open to any ideas which maintain high quality services to our customers but at the same time reduced costs to our tax payers. During the course of the year, early work has commenced on the council's approach to digitalisation and on its approach to being more commercial. These are actions within the new council plan

Financial framework

The framework encompasses strategic financial planning, budget setting and monitoring supported by robust internal control. Strategic financial

planning results in the approval of a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This strategy outlines the factors effecting the council's financial position, quantifies the level of challenge faced by the council and details the strategies to be followed to meet this challenge. The MTFS is supported by the annual budget report which details the level of budget provision and council tax for the forthcoming year. Both the MTFS and the budget report are aided in their development by the Transform Working Group. This group is made up of 14 cross party members, working in partnership with senior management, who meet throughout the year to support the transformational and financial work of the council.

Following the setting of the budget, council uses a rigorous monitoring and reporting process to ensure the budget is delivered within the parameters set by the MTFS. This includes detailed and tailored monthly monitoring reports to service managers and Corporate Leadership Team and an expanded level of information being reported to both Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee on a quarterly basis. A new Financial Outturn report was produced in summer 2015 to finalise the year end position for members before the audited Statement of Accounts is approved at Audit Committee. The monitoring process will be further enhanced in 2016/17 with the introduction of quarterly challenge panels.

The framework also includes a number of other policies and strategies to ensure good financial practice is observed. These include the Financial Procedure Rules, which were refreshed in 2015, and the authorised signatory list, which is updated on an on-going basis.

yearly host a seminar to discuss topical issues."

Communications

Communicating effectively is really important to us. To ensure we reach out to as many of our communities and stakeholders as possible, we use a wide range of communication channels. Tewkesbury Borough News is our residents' newspaper, which is delivered to all 37,000 households in the borough.

Other forms of communication include press releases to the media, which are reported online, through print, and on radio and television, as well as responding quickly to the many media enquiries we receive. Alongside these traditional forms of communication, we are also communicating via social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and through e-newsletters.

We produce two main e-newsletters. Parish Matters is our quarterly electronic newsletter, which communicates the latest news to our parish and town councils. Borough in Business is our e-newsletter to businesses, which provides the latest relevant information to our businesses across the borough. We also value our partnership working with our town and parish Councils and twice yearly host a seminar to discuss topical issues.

Through all of our channels of communication, and in line with our Communications Strategy (2015-2017), we are committed to being open, honest and transparent, which ensures accountability. As evidence of communicating transparently, the council is broadly compliant with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

Defining function and roles

The Council's constitution provides a clear statement on the roles and responsibilities of members and senior officers. In light of the last organisational review and new management responsibilities, a revised Scheme of Delegation was approved at Council on 30 July 2013 as an interim measure pending a full review of the Scheme which was due to be undertaken during Autumn 2015.

The last full review of the Council's constitution was undertaken at the end of 2007. Since that time, as stated in the above paragraph, it has been updated on a piecemeal basis taking account of changes to the political and management structure of the Council. The comprehensive update of the constitution is an outstanding action from 2015/16 so will be carried forward as a significant governance issue.

The Council's political governance has, since May 2009, comprised an Executive Committee with an Overview & Scrutiny Committee and a separate Audit Committee. The Council is responsible for determining the most significant plans, policies and strategies (the Policy Framework). All other matters relating to operational delivery within the budget and policy framework are delegated to the Executive Committee or to officers. The Executive Committee consists of Lead Members who oversee their individual portfolios and as necessary communicate matters of specific interest to the wider Council membership.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee provides challenge and assists with policy formulation. A review of the effectiveness of this committee was undertaken in 2015/16 to ensure the committee

continues to add value and an action plan approved for further improvements. The Council has two committees which deal with governance, internal control and ethical arrangements (Audit Committee and Standards Committee). Additionally, there are two quasi-judicial committees dealing with licensing and planning.

Risk Management

The Council has a risk management strategy which is programmed for review in 2016/17. It is important the strategy reflects the council's risk appetite given the councils emerging approach to commercialism. A corporate risk register is reported at each Audit Committee and as part of the strategy review, a formal review of the risk register will also be undertaken. The review of risk management related activity has been identified as a significant governance issue. Introduced for the first time in a formal environment is the production of an annual Health and Safety overview report. This will be reported to Audit Committee on 22 June 2016 and will give assurance as to the adequacy of the council's Health and Safety arrangements.

Project Management

Aligned to and supporting the risk management framework, is a project management framework. All significant projects are monitored through a corporate project management database, Sharepoint and each project is supported with a risk register. The framework was reviewed during 2015/16 and this led to the re-instigation of the Project Programme Board which provides an environment for project approval, challenge and monitoring.

Business Continuity

Business continuity is a strand of risk management. Work has commenced during 2015/16 to update business continuity plans within individual service areas. This together with scenario testing, which was undertaken in February 2016 has been facilitated by the Civil Protection Team. Service plans will be completed during the course of 2016/17, priority systems identified and a review of the corporate plan undertaken. These actions will form part of a wider review of the overall business continuity arrangements. This has been identified as a significant governance issue.

Fraud and Whistle blowing

The council has an anti-fraud, corruption and bribery policy and a separate whistle blowing policy. These are programmed for review during 2016/17. Internal Audit routinely considers the likelihood of fraud occurring within the systems being audited and where appropriate makes recommendations to improve internal control. As confirmed through the internal audit monitoring reports there have been no whistle blowing incidents or corporate related frauds reported during the year.

An exercise was undertaken during the year to assess the council's overall fraud arrangements, using the 'Fighting Fraud' checklist as the basis. The conclusion was there were satisfactory arrangements in place and these are relevant and proportionate for a council our size. The exercise did identify improvement areas and these include fraud awareness training, effective ways of reporting fraud and the verification of agency workers. These will be taken forward by the

Corporate Governance Group and progress reported to the Audit Committee.

Partnership work has commenced during the year between the Revenues and Benefits service and a pilot Gloucestershire Fraud Hub. The intention is to counter fraud through intelligence led prevention, detection and investigation. The pilot is led by Audit Cotswolds who have been successful in obtaining Department for Communities and Local Government grant funding towards initial set-up costs. The bid was supported by all Gloucestershire districts and the County. The aspiration is to create a sustainable hub. To evidence that this aspiration is viable, Audit Cotswolds is undertaking a counter-fraud exercise within each district. This exercise at Tewkesbury has recently commenced and is centred around the housing list (Choice Based Lettings), housing benefits and electoral registration. Outcomes will be reported to the Audit Committee during 2016/17.

Audit Committee

Following elections in 2015, this led to changes to committee membership. The new committee has functioned well and is fulfilling its terms of reference. To ensure the committee remains effective, training will be undertaken in 2016/17 supported with a review of effectiveness. This helps to supplement its terms of reference and undertake the core functions of an audit committee as identified within CIPFA guidance Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities. The role of the committee is an important element of the council's governance framework and as such demonstrating the effectiveness of the committee has been identified as a significant governance issue.

Role of the Chief Financial Officer

The Council's 2015/16 financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010). The governance arrangements are an inherent part of the role and responsibilities of the Group Manager (GM) — Finance and Asset Management and are fulfilled in a number of ways, for example:

- The GM is a member of Corporate
 Management Team, helping it to develop and
 implement strategy and to resource and
 deliver the Council's strategic objectives.
- The establishment of a Medium Term Financial Strategy. This is updated on a rolling basis and is supported by a robust annual budget setting and monitoring process, developed in conjunction with Transform Working Group.
- The level of reserves and balances is provided in line with good practice guidance.
- Compliance with CIPFA's Code on a Prudential Framework for Local Authority Capital Finance and CIPFA's Treasury Management Code.
- The provision of clear, well presented, timely, complete and accurate information and reports to budget managers on budgetary and financial performance.
- The continued publication of accurate and timely accounts
- Supported by a finance team with the resources, expertise and systems necessary to perform its role effectively.

Role of the Monitoring Officer

The Borough Solicitor is the appointed Monitoring Officer. The post is shared with Cheltenham

seen the delivery of extensive training and development."

Borough Council. This function is to ensure compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations. The Monitoring Officer must report to the Council, after consulting with the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) and Chief Finance Officer, if any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. No cases have been reported during the year by the Monitoring Officer. The roles and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer are defined within the Council's constitution.

Member and senior officer development

The Council's first year of office has seen the delivery of extensive induction training and development. The training was available to all Members and covered:-

- Introduction to the development framework
- Scrutiny
- Planning
- Licensing
- The council's place programme
- Equalities and diversity training and safeguarding
- The council's finances
- The role of councillor
- Freedom of information and data protection
- How a council meeting works

Following the induction training, councillors have participated in additional training development as set out below:-

- Essential skills for the 21st century councillor
- Devolution seminar
- Intranet demonstration
- IT session with IT and Member Services

- Planning systems thinking review member briefing
- Media training
- Tidal lagoon briefing
- Achieve system demonstration
- Speed and effective reading session
- The role of elected Members in an emergency seminar
- S106 agreement briefings
- Budget seminar
- Community infrastructure levy seminar
- Council plan workshop
- Boudary review seminar
- Chairing skills training
- Tewkesbury town regeneration seminar

A management development programme to support managers in their roles and develop skills and competencies was completed in 2015/16. This included supported learning sets and coaching circles which can be replicated through the workforce. A centralised training budget is in place which is informed by the Personal, Professional Development appraisal scheme. The Council's workforce is recognised as its most important asset. Therefore, establishing an effective and cohesive approach to the development of the workforce is essential. The findings of the peer challenge recommended that the Council needed to take a more proactive and planned approach to workforce development. In response a Workforce **Development Strategy** was programmed for implementation during 2015/16. Initial work has commenced on this but needs to be finalised during 2016/17. This was identified as a significant governance issue last year and as it remains outstanding this will be carried forward to 2016/17.

"a satisfactory level of control

exists in relation to the council's governance, risk and systems of internal control."

Standards Committee

The role of the committee is to promote and ensure high standards of member conduct and behaviour including those in town and parish councils and to assist members and co-opted members to observe the Code of Conduct. The committee has reviewed the member/officer relations protocols which was adopted by the council in April 2016. A refresh of the protocol for councillors and officers involved in the planning process is to take place in 2016/17.

Role of Head of Internal Audit

Internal audit arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA document 'the role of the head of internal in public service organisations Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010). The service is also working, where practical to full compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Annually, the Chief Audit Executive (Group Manager – Corporate Services) produces a report summarising the work of Internal Audit. This report provides an overall opinion on the level of control that exists within the systems audited. The 2015/16 annual report, presented at Audit Committee on 22 June 2016, concluded that a satisfactory level of control exists in relation to the council's governance, risk and systems of internal control.

Head of Paid Service function (Chief Executive)

This post is required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with the function and duties detailed within the Council's constitution. The Chief Executive heads a Corporate Leadership Team

(CLT) comprising a Deputy Chief Executive and Borough Solicitor. Supporting this team, are 7 Group Managers.

Effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the Head of Paid Service. For example, the post holder has a 6 monthly appraisal by members, is subject to peer mentoring, regularly meets with Group Leaders to discuss key strategic issues and leads CLT which meets on a weekly basis.

Partnership working

The council recognises that it cannot achieve its priorities without effective partnership working. We are positive about working with others and this is a core value within our council plan. This includes working with communities, the voluntary sector, town and parish councils and neighbourhood groups to achieve common goals.

The council continues to develop partnership working further through its Public Service Centre. Residents can access a range of services under one roof due to the co-location of partner agencies. This has made it easier for partners to link up on a number of issues such as anti-social behaviour, delivery of the Families First Programme, enviro crimes and financial inclusion.

We currently have two shared service arrangements, legal services (One Legal) and building control which are both shashared with Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC). CBC is the lead authority for building control and TBC the lead for One Legal which expanded in April 2015 to include Gloucester City Council. Each arrangement is supported with a robust governance structure.

the work of senior management who have responsibility... for the governance environment."

The Council is part of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Management Committee. A key benefit is that the Council will have influence over the whole waste management system for Gloucestershire, including future projects for treatment or disposal options and the recycling centres. The Council's Depot Services function including its waste and recycling services were transferred to the Local Authority Company Ubico in April 2015. Other key services which are managed by an external management company are the new leisure centre, managed by Places for People and off street car parking, managed by APCOA. There is strong governance arrangements in place for all our key partnerships.

Review of effectiveness

The council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of senior management who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the head of internal audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates. The Council's process for maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework included the following (but is not an exhaustive list):

- Quarterly performance reports presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and the outcome of their review taken to Executive Committee.
- External audit reporting and any issues

- identified brought to the attention of the Audit Committee.
- Internal Audit reporting and any issues identified brought to the attention of the Audit Committee.
- Audit Committee monitoring of significant governance issues.
- Monitoring delivery of key corporate projects.
- Regular Corporate Leadership Team meetings and management team meetings
- Strong political structure and good
 Member/officer relationships to support accountability and transparency
- Regular meetings of the Transform Working Group to help deliver a sustainable budget.
- The work of the Standards Committee in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors.
- Monitoring of key policies such as the Whistleblowing Policy, anti-fraud and corruption policy and complaints framework, including Local Ombudsman reports.
- Assurance from key partnerships.
- Corporate Governance Group which oversees matters relating to the governance of the Council.
- The council's Health and Safety framework

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Corporate Governance Group and endorsement by the Audit Committee, and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The areas already addressed and those to be specifically addressed with new actions planned are outlined on page 15.

Governance issue		Proposed action	Timescale	Responsible officer/group
1	Constitution	Review and update the constitution	December 2016	Group Manager, Democratic Services
2	Risk Management	 Review of the risk management strategy Workshop on risk appetite Reconsider the main corporate risks and update corporate risk register 	December 2016	Group Manager, Corporate Services
3	Business Continuity	 All service plans to be updated Review of corporate plan Identify and prioritise key systems 	March 2017	Group Manager, Corporate Services
4	Audit Committee effectiveness	 Meet the Internal Audit team workshop Audit Committee training Undertake a review of the effectiveness of the committee 	December 2016	Group Manager, Corporate Services
5	Workforce development strategy	Develop and approve strategy	September 2016	Human Resources Advisor

Signed on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council

Councillor Robert Vines Leader of the Council

Mike Dawson Chief Executive

Date Date

Mike Dawson
Chief Executive
Tewkesbury Borough Council

