

**Annual Governance Statement (2022/23)**

<b>Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</b>		
<b>How We Meet these Principles</b>	<b>Where You Can See Governance in action (details provided on the NDC website)</b>	<b>Assurance Received and Issues Identified</b>
<p><b>Behaving with integrity</b></p> <p>There are Codes of Conduct for Members (conforming to the LGA guidance) and Staff (Employees Code of Conduct (May 2016)).</p> <p>Members Code of Conduct training is carried out by the Monitoring Officer (last done in May and June 2023)</p> <p>In terms of Culture, there has been a sustained approach in the last couple of years to instil a culture of openness and to encourage officers to come forward with issues and concerns.</p>	<p>Codes of conduct for members are kept up to date and were last reviewed and updated in July 2021. This latest code for Councillors puts increased emphasis on the individual responsibility of members.</p> <p>Members and Employees <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> explains how staff are expected to behave.</p> <p>The Planning Code of Conduct has also been reviewed and was approved by Annual Council in May 23.</p> <p><a href="#">Terms of reference and minutes of the Governance Committee</a>.</p> <p>Requirement detailed in the <a href="#">Constitution</a> (as per the Localism Act 2011).</p>	<p>A new Code of Conduct for Councillors and Co-opted Members was adopted by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021. Full training was provided to Members in January and April 2022. Mandatory training for all Members has been provided following the May 2023 District and Parish elections</p> <p>Adherence to legislation (and Council regulations) related to the areas reviewed is confirmed in each internal audit undertaken. The terms of reference of the Governance Committee was updated in March 23 (and adopted by Council in May 2023) to add greater detail regarding the committees Standards function.</p>

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<p>Governance Committee – one of primary responsibility is to consider compliance with rules, regulations, propriety etc.</p> <p>Councillors make declarations of interest at all Council meetings attended, which are published with minutes and held on our website.</p> <p>Registers of Member Interests are held. Interests held by staff are completed by them on the Myinsite section. In addition, the statement of accounts includes declarations of related party transactions for each member and senior officers.</p> <p>Gifts &amp; hospitality rules exist for Members and Staff which are available on the internal intranet under the Myinsite section.</p> <p>Our Whistleblowing policy was reviewed in June 2021.</p> <p>We have a clear complaints procedure on our website. Customer Care guidelines are listed on our internal Insite.</p>	<p>Registers of interests are held on the internet. The process has been reviewed prior to the May 2023 District elections for all members to update.</p> <p>Members are required to notify the Corporate and Community Services of any gifts and hospitality received which is then published on the Council's website.</p> <p><a href="#">Complaints procedure</a> on the intranet.</p> <p><a href="#">Customer Charter provided on the NDC website.</a></p>	<p>Gifts &amp; Hospitality and Declarations are audited every few years by Internal Audit. Members register of interests forms were reviewed by Internal Audit as part of the Members Allowances audit in June 22. The audit opinion was reasonable assurance.</p>
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<p>We take the Health and Safety of our Staff extremely seriously; this is supported by risk assessments (particularly related to the C-19 emergency, a H&amp;S Committee exists to discuss issues / risks). Updates, guidance and direction have been actively provided to officers on reducing the C-19 risk etc.</p> <p>We provide new Members with induction training on appointment. We hold corporate inductions for staff on a regular basis.</p> <p>We evaluate the on-going training needs of Members. Member training programme covering wide range of topics, after Elections (2023) and then refresher training 2 years later which the Corporate &amp; Community Services team are working on now.</p> <p>We operate an annual appraisal scheme for all staff to identify development and skills needs and assess performance. Training needs are identified through this process, which results in identification of common themes to address through training or education.</p>	<p><a href="#">Health and Safety Policy – Statement, Organisation, Sick management policy.</a></p> <p>New member training programme following the district elections, approved by Full Council in Jan 2023. Councillors will be provided training on health and safety. A guide on Health and Safety, Personal Safety and Lone Working and incident reporting form has also been produced which has shared with Councillors as part of their welcome pack.</p>	<p>Internal audit review of Covid-19 Staff Safety provided a Reasonable Assurance (Jan 21). One significant recommendation was for more focus on staff mental health and well-being. This is being actively addressed with the provision of trained mental health advisors and an overarching wellbeing strategy.</p> <p>A survey of training needs of Governance Committee members was undertaken as part of the January 2023 meeting</p> <p>Members have completed the Mid-Term refresher training. Further Training for Governance Committee members taking place in May 2023 following the election.</p>
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<p>expected to behave (i.e bullying, harassment, engagement with staff etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Disciplinary policy and procedure</li> <li>➤ Grievance policy and procedure</li> <li>➤ Family Friendly Policy</li> </ul> <p>Regular Equality and Diversity training as part of continuing development. Councillors are also provided with Equality and Diversity training following their Election.</p> <p>An Employee Handbook has been produced.</p> <p>Commitment to Equality and Diversity on the intranet via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ an Equality Strategy (2019-23) – to support equality in delivery of services and supporting staff.</li> <li>➤ Equality in Employment</li> </ul> <p>Adherence to Accessibility requirements are detailed in key documents and the internal intranet – all staff have been invited to participate in Accessibility Training.</p>	<p>A Health &amp; Wellbeing strategy was introduced in June 2022</p> <p><a href="#">Equality and Diversity</a></p>	<p>The Internal Audit review of Equality and Diversity had a limited opinion. However, since the audit the Council has provided a range of community and workforce data on our website to address compliance with the Equality Duty.</p> <p><a href="#">NDC has claimed top spot as best local authority website for accessibility in the Sitemorse INDEX</a></p>
<p><b>Respecting the rule of law and regulatory requirements etc</b></p>		

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<p>The Constitution is under continuous review. Updates were made for the governance arrangements resulting from the change in Heads of Service. These were reviewed by Governance Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and approved by Full Council in July 2022. Ad-hoc changes are incorporated quickly, including at the May 2023 Annual Council where amendments were made to clarify the Head of Planning Housing and Health’s delegated powers.</p> <p>We comply with Statutory Provisions. Good awareness of the significant provisions in the different business areas. The Constitution lists some of those provisions.</p> <p>The section 151 officer and Monitoring Officer have specific duties to ensure the legality of decisions and processes and to investigate any alleged breaches.</p> <p>Statutory Officer meetings are held on a quarterly basis, including Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Head of Governance</p> <p>Compliance with CIPFA’s Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (CIPFA, 2015).</p>	<p><a href="#">Constitution published on intranet.</a></p>	<p>Non compliance with statutory provisions are subject to appeals.</p>
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<p>We comply with the Whistleblowing legislation and have a Whistleblowing policy.</p> <p>We have up-to-date anti-fraud and corruption policies and procedures. These were updated, and approved by Governance Committee in June 2021. Work is currently underway to create a fraud risk register to help ensure controls are effective.</p> <p>Compliance with procurement regulations including competing contracts, and publishing list of contracts over £5k via the Contract Register.</p> <p>General legal advice provided for business operations either as a stand-alone piece of advice or specific to a case on which Legal Services are instructed to advise.</p> <p>Role of Monitoring Officer – qualified, experienced individual and team of lawyers and solicitors.</p>	<p><a href="#">Contract Register</a></p>	<p>The adequacy of the anti-fraud and corruption policy and strategy were confirmed by Internal Audit in February 2021.</p> <p>Internal Audit continues to work with the council to develop the fraud risk registers for high risk areas.</p> <p>An internal audit on Procurement in July 2021 gave reasonable assurance. Since the report we have also strengthened compliance to procurement regulations with changes to the constitution.</p>
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Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement		
How We Meet these Principles	Where You Can See Governance in action	Assurance Received and Issues Identified
<p><b>Openness</b></p> <p>A breakdown on the level of Council Tax Charges, and how we spend the budget is contained on our Website.</p> <p>The public can ask for general information, or specific advice on planning, or other business operations via north Devon – there is a contacts page on the NDC site.</p> <p>We publish agendas and minutes for all our meetings on our website. Members of the public are encouraged to attend, and also given opportunity to ask questions. Members of the public are also able to attend public Council and Committee meetings which are held at Brynsworthy Environmental Centre virtually. These meetings are recorded and then made available on the Councils YouTube channel</p>	<p><a href="#">See this page for Council Tax charges, and how the budget is spent.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Contact Us page</a></p> <p><a href="#">Browse meetings section</a> Committee meeting dates, agendas and minutes of committee meetings.</p> <p><a href="#">Taking Part in Meetings</a> section on the intranet explaining how public can visit and participate in council meetings.</p> <p>Consultation and Involvement / Communication Strategy - <a href="#">Consultation and Engagement</a></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Provide an annual summary reports on costs, delivery, priorities etc. to report more clearly the impact it is having. (This has been a recommendation since the 2020/21 return)</p> <p>Customer Services centre ensure prompt resolution of queries and questions. Reviewed by DAP in Nov 2022 with a Reasonable Assurance.</p> <p>Notes of our meetings are on the website (with the exception of Part B business and in certain other limited circumstances on an exceptional basis).</p>



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<p>There is a process in committee meetings to agree which items are Part A and Part B for members to agree.</p> <p>We have an aim to inform, consult and involve everyone in North Devon.</p> <p>Officer decisions taken by council officers, such as urgent decisions and request for waivers are published on the intranet – and can be searched.</p> <p>We have a Freedom of Information publication scheme that enables the public to request information from us. These show that requests are largely being dealt with in the 20 working day timescale. We also have a Publication Scheme which contains many council documents.</p> <p>Procurements are competed through Pro Contract to support fair competition. Generally all contracts worth more than £5,000 are shown on our Contracts Register. We also publish details of spend using our Government Procurement Card and a monthly dataset showing spending</p>	<p><a href="#">Officer Decisions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Process to make an FOI request.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Publication Scheme</a></p> <p><a href="#">Procurement approach, also listed in the Constitution.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Contract Register</a></p>	
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<p>items of £250 or more (personal information is redacted).</p> <p>We have a standard report template for Council papers to support ease of understanding and report writing. All Committee reports will now be produced using Modern Gov.</p> <p>We have a calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely Council reports.</p>		
<p><b>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</b></p> <p>We actively engage with other local councils. There are regular Chief Exec and Leader meetings with all Devon Councils, Devon Section 151 Officer meetings, similar through the authority with different service groups.</p> <p>We work closely with Torridge District Council, including a North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 - 2031 to guide development, and have joint committees such as Local Planning with Torridge, Crematorium with Torridge, Building Control with Mid Devon.</p>	<p><a href="#">Local Plan</a>; Joint committees in place:</p> <p>A People and Place project has been established to review the NDC and Torridge Local Plan and seek community involvement.</p>	<p>The Local Plan was subject to a Planning Inspectorate review in 2018 which noted the plan was “sound”.</p>

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<p>In October 2019 the Local Government Association undertook a Peer Review. The Peer Review Team revisited in Sept/Oct 2021 in order to refresh the report that was issued. These reports were presented to Full Council in January 2022 before being published.</p> <p>We meet with our local colleges of Further Education and key local employers on specific issues.</p> <p>Engagement with other local councils and other public organisations on Climate Change, including jointly employing a Climate Change Officer with Torridge District Council.</p> <p>A Northern Devon Future’s Board has been created with local partners to look at strategic issues for North Devon.</p> <p>A Business Stakeholder and Consultation event held in February 2023 where the Council shared its financial plans together with partners offering local businesses a variety of business support opportunities and networking.</p> <p>The Northern Devon Culture Strategy 2022 - 2027 has a wide range of</p>	<p>Engaging apprentices through local colleges to work in the council.</p> <p>There is a specific section on the NDC Website related to <a href="#">business organisations</a>, and a Local Business Bulletin is produced by the Economic Development team providing focused news related to business organisations</p>	
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<p>contributors: local cultural and community organisations, venues and practitioners.</p> <p>The North Devon and Torridge Community Safety Partnership (NDC, TDC, DCC, D&amp;C Police, D&amp;S Fire &amp; Rescue Service) works with key stakeholders in terms of anti-social behaviour, crime prevention, quality of life.</p>		
<p><b>Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</b></p> <p>We have a Customer Charter to improve how we interact and resolve queries from members of the public and provide</p> <p>We have community consultations: most recently on Animal Licensing Policy, Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Revising Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, and Houses in Multiple Occupation.</p> <p>We have Planning Consultations (in conjunction with Torridge District Council) including the Georgeham Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p><a href="#">Customer Charter</a></p> <p><a href="#">Community Consultations</a></p> <p><a href="#">Planning consultations</a></p>	<p>Internal Audits review of the Customer Service Centre in Oct 22 gave reasonable assurance</p> <p><b>ACTION: Work is continuing to produce a Community Engagement Vision/Strategy to ensure the Council is reaching out to the community (Included in the 21/22 return)</b></p>

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<p>Facility to raise e-petitions (albeit, the last one raised was in 2017).</p> <p>We publish details of consultations and petitions on our website to get the public's views.</p> <p>E-mail newsletters are provided on what is happening in NDC and area – people can sign up to them.</p> <p>NDC Facebook page and other social media channels:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instagram (upon which NDC has made 953 posts and has 2,208 followers as of 1 June 2023);</li> <li>• Twitter (upon which NDC has 12.2k followers as of 1 June 2023).</li> <li>• LinkedIn (upon which NDC has 1,878 followers as of 1 June 2023)</li> </ul> <p>We are a signatory to the 'Local Digital Declaration' (via Digital Strategy) meaning we are committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing the services that best meet the needs of our citizens</li> <li>• Challenge the technology market evaluating the tools and services we need</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Petitions</a></p> <p><a href="#">There is a facility to sign up for newsletters</a> with content that can be customised by the individual for their own interest.</p> <p>Digital Strategy for NDC Service 2023-2026 to support the provision of good, digitally enabled services and supporting access to, and use of, digital tools by colleagues and citizens</p> <p>An External Communication Strategy 2023-2026 was approved in May 2023</p>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect citizens’ privacy and security</li> <li>• Deliver best value for money</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</b></p>		
<p><b>How We Meet these Principles</b></p>	<p><b>Where You Can See Governance in action</b></p>	<p><b>Assurance Received and Issues Identified</b></p>
<p><b>Defining outcomes</b></p> <p>We agreed a North Devon and Torridge Local Plan in October 2018 to shape the future of the area. A People and Place project is underway to seek community involvement and input to changes to the Local Plan.</p> <p>North Devon and Torridge have published a new report which will re-establish a 5 year housing land supply for Northern Devon. This allows us to support only the proposals that contribute towards the long-term vision for Northern Devon and the area’s local plan.</p>	<p><a href="#">Local Plan</a></p>	

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<p>Our Corporate Plan provides a high level guide to Corporate Priorities, why this is important, and facts and challenges. This includes priorities important for Sustainability (Cherish and protect our environment, and Plan for North Devon's future). Some elements have been reported on, such as bringing forward the Commercialisation Strategy report to Full Council in November 2020.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan and corporate priorities were reviewed in December 2021, with new programmes being established to drive forward these plan. A Programme Management Office (PMO) was established to oversee the effective delivery of these programmes.</p> <p>Programmes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organisational Development</li><li>• Housing &amp; Community Safety</li><li>• Regeneration &amp; Economic Growth</li><li>• Environmental enhancement</li><li>• Customer focussed</li></ul> <p>Members receive quarterly updates on these programmes and progress towards the corporate plan. Performance</p>	<p><a href="#">Corporate Plan</a></p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> identify key strategies and policies required to progress the Corporate Plan assigning a role and trigger date for renewal (included in the 21/22 return). The corporate plan will now be reviewed by the new Administration</p>
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<p>indicators have also been linked to the corporate plan</p> <p>We have signed up to a Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2019-22 which includes consideration of Sustainable Procurement, and increased engagement with Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and local businesses.</p> <p>We have a NDC Procurement Sustainability strategy (albeit this is dated 2016). A Procurement Working Group has been set up to review procurement issues including sustainability and social value.</p> <p>We have signed up to the Devon Climate Change Declaration, and appointed an officer shared with Torridge District Council to help us.</p>		<p><b>ACTION: To produce a revised Procurement Strategy covering sustainability and social value</b></p> <p>Internal audit provided a Reasonable Assurance in July 2022 on Governance of Climate Change.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits - delivering</b></p> <p>We have a Corporate plan, with four corporate priorities and a Delivery Plan related to those priorities. Our priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Delivering the best for our customers.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Corporate Plan</a></p>	<p><b>ACTION: Consider how to provide more summary information for the public on <a href="#">Council Performance</a>, as there is no easy to access information on delivery against priorities, plans or indicators. (also mentioned in the 2021/22 return)</b></p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cherishing and protecting our environment.</li> <li>➤ Planning for the future.</li> <li>➤ Achieving financial security.</li> </ul> <p>A new suite of performance indicators have been developed during 22/23 and will help to show delivery against the priorities and plans. This will also aid sharing this information with our stakeholders.</p> <p>We have a Treasury Management function to maximise the return on our capital assets.</p> <p>We have recruited a Climate Change Officer (shared with Torridge District Council).</p> <p>We adopted a Carbon, Environmental and Biodiversity Plan in July 2022 as part of our on-going commitment to reduce our impact on the environment</p> <p>Electric vehicle charging points have been introduced into some of our car parks. In April 23 we added our first fully electric</p>	<p><a href="#">Budgets and Spending information</a> for:</p> <p>Budget Book 2022-23            Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy            Statement of Accounts            Capital Investment Plan            Expenditure Data</p>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> While there is an Asset Management Plan, it is out of date and need re-writing to link to the new Commercialisation Strategy (also mentioned in the 2021/22 return).</p> <p>The Internal Audit report on Climate Change in July 2022 provided a Reasonable Assurance Opinion. The report noted that meeting the Net Emissions target by 2030 would be challenging.</p>
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<p>asset, Eco City Sweeper 2 for keeping our streets clean and tidy.</p> <p>A community woodland in Barnstaple has been expanded with the planting of circa 24,000 new trees.</p>		
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<b>Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b>		
<b>How We Meet these Principles</b>	<b>Where You Can See Governance in action</b>	<b>Assurance Received and Issues Identified</b>
<p><b>Determining interventions</b></p> <p>Our governance is based on committee structure appointed by the council where key decisions are taken. Options are put to appropriate committees for review, discussion and approval – with a favoured officer recommendation for councillors to debate and chose.</p> <p>Decisions are delegated to specific officers as part of the Constitution.</p>	<p><a href="#">How the council operates</a></p> <p>Committee Report Procedure</p>	<p>The process for aligning service budgets, plans and objectives has been reviewed and is more effective</p> <p>Internal Audit progress reports showing areas reviewed, assurance opinion and key actions arising. Recommendations are tracked to completion to confirm control weaknesses are resolved.</p>

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<p>Devon Districts Procurement Strategy identified procurement strategy and priorities to address.</p> <p>Large Procurements subject to consideration of best value for money based on criteria agreed in advance.</p> <p>Regular reports on progress against the Corporate Plan including a set of agreed standard measures to Councillors and staff.</p> <p>All capital programme items are subject to a business case, evaluating the cost of capital financing etc which are scored by a Project Appraisal Group, before progressing for committee approval.</p>		<p>External Auditors report on the Statement of Accounts, including an opinion on Value for Money for the Council.</p>
<p><b>Planning interventions</b></p> <p>The Corporate Plan is carried through into Service Plans which are approved by the Policy and Development Committee. Individual appraisals then reflect the actions in the Service Plans.</p> <p>Progress towards completing actions is reported each month to the Senior Management Team and quarterly to the Strategy and Resources Committee and Governance Committee, along with</p>	<p>Links to corporate plans, KPIs etc.</p>	

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<p>performance indicators. Quarterly reports also go to Full Council so that all Members are aware of the progress.</p> <p>Budgets for different service areas are determined / approved at the start of the year, and outturn is monitored.</p> <p>Calendar of dates for developing and submitting plans and reports for council approval.</p> <p>Schedule for approval of key financial and governance documents such as financial plan.</p> <p>Details of consultations and petitions on our website.</p> <p>A new suite of Key Performance Indicators have been established which can be used to monitor and report performance in all important sectors. A revised quarterly performance report will go to members from July 2023.</p>	<p>Available in minutes of Council and committee meetings. Members of the public can attend these.</p>	
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<p><b>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</b></p> <p>A Budget Book, and Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>Financial Strategy is discussed and agreed with Council.</p> <p>Process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.</p> <p>A Treasury Management Strategy is produced ahead of the start of the year, and a mid-year and Annual Report produced that goes to Strategy and Resources, Policy Development and Full Council.</p> <p>Risk management and performance monitoring are key measures to support interventions.</p> <p>The Governance Committee is supported by independent internal audit assurance reports provided by Internal Audit (DAP), and the External Auditors' annual opinion on the statement of accounts.</p> <p>Governance Committee meetings are held in a public forum.</p>	<p>The Budget Book for 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy Plans which are reported to Full Council</p> <p>Treasury Management Annual Strategy</p> <p>Strategy and Resource reports</p> <p><a href="#">Annual Report from External Auditors</a></p> <p>Annual Reports from Internal Audit.</p> <p>Individual's audits and updates from Internal Audit to Governance Committee.</p> <p>Agreement of Internal Audit Annual Plan by the Governance Committee</p>	<p>External audit compliance to the NAO Code of Audit Practice</p> <p>Conformance of Internal Audit to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.</p>
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<p>The plans of work for both Internal and External Audit are considered and approved by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee will receive regular update reports from both sets of Auditors and will hold management to account for any correcting action that may be required.</p> <p>A new Programme Management Office has been created as part of the new Organisational design for the council. This will support delivery of core priorities and projects.</p>		
<p><b>Principle E: Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b></p>		
<p><b>How We Meet these Principles</b></p>	<p><b>Where You Can See Governance in action</b></p>	<p><b>Assurance Received and Issues Identified</b></p>
<p><b>Developing the entity’s capacity</b></p> <p>We have undertaken a review of internal Governance to improve the council structure and roles / responsibilities and capacity of senior management. This review has completed, and the new structure and heads of service posts have been in place since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.</p>		<p>The capacity building at senior management level was supported by the LGA Peer Reviews.</p>

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<p>The following Heads of Service are all in post from 1st September 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Head of Paid Service/Chief Executive</li><li>• Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive</li><li>• Head of Customer Focus</li><li>• Head of Environmental Enhancement</li><li>• Head of Governance</li><li>• Head of Organisational Development</li><li>• Head of Place and Regeneration</li><li>• Head of Planning, Housing and Health</li><li>• Head of Programme Management and Performance</li></ul> <p>The Constitution – Part 3 Responsibility for Functions, Annexe 2 cover the Officer Delegations to the above officers and also the Monitoring Officer and Harbour Master</p> <p>A range of Key Performance Indicators are held on the use of council facilities including Leisure Centres, Park facilities, refuse collection, car parks</p>		
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<p>Use of NMD Building Control to share activity with Mid Devon.</p> <p>There is a close relationship with Torridge to cooperate i.e. Local Plan.</p> <p>Recruitment of a shared Climate Change Officer in mid-2021.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken to improve Business Continuity Planning, including Single Points of Failure and reliance on core suppliers, Service Resumption Plans etc.</p> <p>Significant investment in IT and remote working (particularly since start of the C-19 pandemic).</p> <p>Structures are in place to seek and encourage public participation (committee meetings, planning applications and public consultations)</p>		<p>DAP audit of Business Continuity in February 2022 gave Reasonable assurance.</p>
<p><b>Developing the capability of the entity’s leadership and other individuals</b></p> <p>We evaluate the on-going training needs of Members. Member training programme covering wide range of topics, after Elections (2023) and then refresher</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>New Councillors Induction Programme</p>	



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<p>training 2 years later which Members have now completed.</p> <p>We provide new Members with induction training on appointment.</p> <p>We provide ongoing management development as well as opportunities for aspiring managers</p> <p>As part of the new management organisation, senior management posts were widely advertised and were subject to a robust interview process against the Council behaviour framework.</p> <p>There are regular “managers forums” and staff briefings to share information, training (i.e. Cyber Security) etc and to cascade information down.</p> <p>We take the Health and Safety of our Staff extremely seriously with a H&amp;S committee to discuss any issues or problems and resolve them.</p> <p>Our business areas are encourage the development of staff, engaging apprentices and offering additional qualifications and secondment opportunities</p>	<p>Member Development Policy</p> <p>Governance Committee recent Annual Review of the Committee’s Effectiveness</p>	
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<p>There is a Staff Training Policy. This includes the requirement for Induction training provided to new staff involving a day's training on policies, procedures, H&amp;S etc.</p> <p>All staff have job descriptions setting out their main duties the personal qualities/skills and attributes required for each post.</p> <p>We operate an annual appraisal scheme for all staff to identify objectives and monitor delivery against them, and identify development and skills needs and assess performance.</p>	<p>Training Policy</p>	<p><b>ACTION: The staff training policy is currently being reviewed and updated</b></p>
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<p><b>Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b></p>		
<p><b>How We Meet these Principles</b></p>	<p><b>Where You Can See Governance in action</b></p>	<p><b>Assurance Received and Issues Identified</b></p>
<p><b>Managing risk</b></p> <p>The council holds a Corporate Risk Register, supported by Service Risk Registers.</p>		<p>Internal Audits report on Risk Management in March 2023 provided a</p>

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<p>A new Risk Management Framework has been updated and has been reviewed by CORGI. This will be considered by Governance Committee in June 2023</p> <p>The number of risks held on the Corporate Risk Register have been reduced to provide greater focus. The register itself has been changed to make it easier for Members to see the risk scores and changes. The new Corporate Risk Register was approved by Governance Committee in March 23.</p> <p>Senior Management Team have also approved a new risk escalation process and risk map which helps to visualise service risks across the Council. The risk Map is reviewed by SMT on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>All reports which go to Committee include a risk assessment as part of the required components on our report template.</p> <p>Risks on our risk register are allocated to individual managers who are named on reports.</p> <p>The Governance Committee actively monitors risks and controls at their meetings, with a formal review every year.</p>	<p>The performance of Devon Audit Partnership in completing the internal audit plan is monitored through regular Governance Committee updates.</p> <p>Internal audit reports that are significant such as providing a Limited Assurance, are discussed in Governance Committee.</p>	<p>Reasonable Assurance and commented on the strong risk culture within NDC.</p> <p>The audit programme included review of most of the core financial systems used by the council. These did not identify any significant issue.</p>
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<p>DAP provides risk based internal audits where it provides assurance of control effectiveness against risks to delivery of business objectives.</p> <p>A new counter fraud policy and strategy was agreed in June 2021 by Governance Committee. A new fraud risk register is being developed in conjunction with DAP</p>		
<p><b>Managing performance</b></p> <p>Our Performance has been mapped to the Corporate Plan; all our Aims have performance measures.</p> <p>Benchmarking information is included where available; a Council –wide subscription to LG Inform Plus is improving the use of benchmarking and is regularly promoted by managers at Team meetings.</p> <p>Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports that are adhered to.</p> <p>The agendas and minutes of Strategy and Resources committee are published on our websites.</p> <p>Quarterly performance and financial management report taken to members</p>	<p>Committee Report Procedure</p> <p>Meetings, agendas etc</p>	

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<p>which sets out financial information and also an appendix table of Key performance indicators and performance against service plan actions.</p> <p>New KPI's have been developed as discussed above.</p>	<p><a href="#">Strategy and Resources Committee</a> minutes and supporting papers</p>	
<p><b>Robust internal control</b></p> <p>Detailed Council Regulations provide guidance and direction on council operations.</p> <p>A larger senior management team has helped the control framework.</p> <p>We have worked with our internal auditors to produce an Assurance Map which highlights strengths and weaknesses to support action prioritisation.</p> <p>We have updated our anti-fraud and corruption Policy and Strategy. A Fraud Working group has been set up to create a fraud risk register</p> <p>A partnership of Devon public sector organisations provide the internal audit service, and complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Services. An audit programme is delivered each year based</p>		<p>Our external auditors provided an <i>“Unqualified opinion on the Councils financial statements for 2021-22.”</i></p> <p>Assurance has been provided through internal audit assignment reports, AC progress reports and Annual report.</p> <p>Overall – for the 2022-23 audit year, DAP provided an overall ‘Reasonable Assurance’ - <i>generally sound systems of governance, risk management and control in place across the organisation.</i></p>

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<p>on a plan approved by the Governance committee.</p> <p>Our Governance Committee attend training offered internally and externally, including training provided by the S151 officer.</p>		
<p><b>Managing data</b></p> <p>We have Data Protection and Information Security Policies in place. This includes a Data Protection Policy, which describes how we handle use and protect personal data.</p> <p>We have mandatory Data Protection and Information Security training for all staff and Members.</p> <p>We have a process to make information available if subject to freedom of information requests and data subject requests.</p>	<p><a href="#">Policies on NDC website, other policies are on our internal intranet.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Process to make an FOI request</a></p> <p><a href="#">Process to make a data subject request</a></p>	<p><b>ACTION: Improve Council wide understanding of cyber risks and cyber risk culture</b></p> <p>Internal Audit review of Information Governance in April 23 was limited assurance, stating improvements required around IG Security and Management. The audit did confirm good assurance in IG Compliance.</p> <p>Internal Audits cyber security assurance was Limited in April 23. A cyber security audit was undertaken in February 2022 on Malware and Ransomware, where Reasonable Assurance was given, and an additional audit on Firewalls in February 2022, where Reasonable Assurance was given</p> <p>There is a Service Plan action to improve the document retention on the Civica</p>

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		Financials core system with a target date of March 2024.
<p><b>Strong Public Financial Management</b></p> <p>We publish a Budget Book for each year which includes the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Terms Financial Strategy.</p> <p>Our annual Medium Term Financial Strategy covers the next five years.</p> <p>We produced a 10 year Capital Strategy</p> <p>We have undertaken a compliance assessment against the new Financial Management Code as required by CIPFA. This was supported by Internal and External auditors</p>	<p><a href="#">Budgets and Spending information</a> for:</p> <p>Budget Book 2022-23</p> <p>Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>Statement of Accounts</p> <p>Capital Investment Plan</p> <p>Expenditure Data</p>	<p>Our External auditors will complete a risk based review of the Council’s value for money arrangements. In 21/22 they concluded that NDDC had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p>

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<b>Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</b>		
<b>How We Meet these Principles</b>	<b>Where You Can See Governance in action</b>	<b>Assurance Received and Issues Identified</b>
<p><b>Implementing good practice in transparency</b></p> <p>We publish our Statement of Accounts on our website.</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement produced, and signed by Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. AGS is discussed by Governance Committee and endorsed by Council.</p> <p>Quarterly performance and financial management report taken to members which sets out financial information and also an appendix table of Key performance indicators and performance against service plan actions.</p>	<p><a href="#">Annual Audit Letter</a></p> <p><a href="#">Annual Governance Statement.</a></p>	
<p><b>Implementing good practices in reporting</b></p>		



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<p>We publish our Annual Governance Statement (which includes a list of issues of concern) on our website. The AGS issues highlighted are reported to governance committee as part of the Audit recommendation tracker report of Pentana information, with progress notes</p> <p>We report on our performance quarterly to Strategy and Resources, Policy Development, and Full Council on our performance.</p>	<p><a href="#">Annual Governance Statement</a></p>	
<p><b>Assurance and effective accountability</b></p> <p>We provide the notice of appointment of External Auditor onto our external website – Grant Thornton from 2018 to 2023.</p> <p>External audits are undertaken every year, and the results are published on our internet.</p> <p>External audit recommendations are progressed to completion. These are checked by EA in the next audit cycle.</p> <p>DAP has completed our annual self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.</p>	<p><a href="#">Audits, Inspections and Assessments</a> – containing the notice of appointment, annual audit letter</p> <p><a href="#">Annual Audit Letter</a></p>	

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<p>Peer reviews have been undertaken, with one completed in 2016. An exercise was also undertaken in February 2020, but due to the emergency the report was not submitted for approval. A follow up LGA review was held in Sept/Oct 2021.</p>		<p>LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Refresh 2021: Feedback report</p> <p><i>'We saw so many green shoots of optimism across the organisation with the majority of our original recommendations in respect of organisational leadership and capacity progresses with impressive impetus and success. Putting time and energy into nurturing this early progress will provide an enviable springboard for future improvement'</i></p>
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