

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

**Principle One: Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.**

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users.</i>		
<p>Develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision used as a basis for corporate and service planning.</li> <li>• Community engagement and involvement.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has in place a clear statement of the organisation's purpose and its vision for the borough. The council's adopted Local Plan Core Strategy sets out the strategic vision for the development of the borough to 2028 across housing needs, commercial, public and private development, including transport infrastructure, along with protection for the local environment.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-core-strategy">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-core-strategy</a></p> <p>To work towards this vision and ultimately deliver relevant outcomes for local residents, the council's Corporate Plan 2011-15 (mid-term review) sets out five clear strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Well-being;</li> <li>• Housing;</li> <li>• A clean and green environment;</li> <li>• Economic development and regeneration; and</li> <li>• Managing the council's business responsibly.</li> </ul> <p>Underpinning all of the council's work is a commitment to 'Connecting with the Community' and ensuring its leadership is informed by the community itself.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/strategic-policy/corporate-plan-mid-term-review-2014">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/strategic-policy/corporate-plan-mid-term-review-2014</a></p> <p>To effectively communicate the council's Corporate Plan, the document is made available to all staff and residents via the council's website and in 2014-15 formed part of the corporate suite of policy documents that are identified as being formal reading for all council staff.</p> <p>Regular promotion of the council's key priorities was also undertaken during the year with quarterly updates on performance through the Your Borough publications and publication of the updates on the council's website.</p>

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Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
		<p>More broadly, the council's business planning process specifically links in the activities of the individual departments, and ultimately those of individual officers, with the strategic objectives of the council providing a 'golden thread', an understanding of how each officer contributes to the delivery of the council's vision.</p>
<p>Review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements.</p>	<p>Record of the review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authority's vision.</li> <li>• The governance code.</li> </ul>	<p>In view of the current plan running until 2015, in November 2014 the council instigated a formal review process with the aim of establishing a set of new corporate objectives that take account of the borough's changing needs and the financial climate facing local government.</p> <p>The initial review stage was a public consultation event which was delivered between November 2014 and January 2015 and saw 456 participants provide details of their priorities for the borough into the 2015-19 period.</p> <p>The later stages of the review process including the identification of key strategic objectives and a revised performance reporting framework will be delivered in 2015-16 and will be formulated in consideration of the priorities of the new council executive following the 2015 local elections. The new Corporate Plan is to be presented to Full Council for adoption in October 2015.</p> <p>In regards to governance, as detailed elsewhere in this document in light of recommendations made by the <a href="#">LGA Peer Challenge exercise</a>, in 2014-15 the council initiated a review of its Constitution which included a review of the Code of Corporate Governance. The revised Constitution is due for adoption early in 2015-16.</p>
<p>Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships protocol including an agreement on the role and scope of each partner's contribution.</li> <li>• Strategic partnership priorities.</li> <li>• Partnership agreements.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has in place a robust Working in Partnership Framework which is the central point of reference in developing new partnerships for the council. This was updated and subsequently approved by the <a href="#">Cabinet</a> in February 2014 and was available for referral throughout 2014-15 with a review due in 2015-16 following the adoption of the council's new Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The Working in Partnership Framework includes a thorough Partnership Evaluation Form which must have Director and Lead Member approval (and Cabinet approval dependent on the significance of the partnership). In addition, the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer also provide their financial and legal perspectives on any new partnership prior to sign-off.</p> <p>The evaluation form utilised specifically requires officers to detail the contributions the partnership will make towards assisting the council in achieving its corporate objectives but also the outcome that we can expect to see for our community. This information is then duly reflected in the council's Corporate Register of Partnerships.</p>

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Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
		<p>The council publishes a <i>Corporate Register of Partnerships</i> on its website which was reviewed and published in October 2014. This document provides details of all of the partnerships the council is actively involved in along with details of the aims and objectives of the partnerships and the governance arrangements to support the partnership:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/partnership-working">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/partnership-working</a></p>
<p>Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal annual report which includes key points raised by external agencies and service users' feedback on service delivery.</li> <li>• Annual Financial Statements.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2014-15, the council produced a formal annual report to report back on the 2013-14 financial year, which was approved by Cabinet and reported on the council's website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/annual-report-for-gravesham">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/annual-report-for-gravesham</a></p> <p>In addition, a summary of this was included in the <i>Your Borough</i> magazine that is delivered to all households within the borough.</p> <p>The council also reports details of the year-end performance outturns for all measures of accountability and information only indicators to the <a href="#">Performance and Administration Committee</a>: Quarterly updates in performance are provided to the relevant Cabinet Committees, with the contextual and numerical updates also published via the Internet Performance Library:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance</a></p> <p>The council has a dedicated webpage to the council's financial statements, which are published on an annual basis:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/financial-statements">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/financial-statements</a></p> <p>The Civic Budget Book for the council, which sets out the council's budgetary requirements for the year and is agreed annually, is also published on the council's website for public viewing:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/civic-budget-book">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/civic-budget-book</a></p> <p>The External Auditors for the council conduct an annual audit of the council's Statement of Accounts, with their findings published and reported to the <a href="#">Finance &amp; Audit Committee</a>. In addition, the annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman is also considered by the <a href="#">Finance &amp; Audit Committee</a>.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning.</i>		
<p>Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An agreed set of quality standard measures for each service element and included in service plans.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has adopted a suite of performance measures (measures of accountability) and information only indicators in order to assist the Members, officers and the public in determining the quality of the council's services and commitment to the Corporate Business Plan objectives.</p> <p>The performance data has been reported on a quarterly basis to each of the Cabinet Committees, with an 'Exception' report being made available to Cabinet. Subsequently, this information has then been published on the council's website via the council's performance management system:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance</a></p> <p>Budget monitoring reports are presented to both the Finance &amp; Audit Committee and the Cabinet on a quarterly basis to ensure robust budget monitoring.</p>
<p>Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular reports on the progress of service delivery.</li> <li>Performance trends are established and reported on.</li> <li>Formal complaints policy and procedures exist and are operating effectively.</li> <li>Evidence that complaints have informed positive performance improvements.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has in place a Corporate Customer Service Charter which makes clear the corporate standards customers can expect to receive. The Charter was issued to all council officers in November 2014 as part of the corporate suite of policy documents that are identified as being formal reading for all council staff.</p> <p>The Charter sets out how the council will address reports of service failures and complaints from members of the public. The council's website hosts specific details of the corporate complaints procedure alongside details of the Local Government Ombudsman. In addition, the page also hosts the opportunity for service users to register compliments for the high levels of service received. The council uses this feedback to identify and share good practice across departments:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/complaints-compliments/2">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/complaints-compliments/2</a></p> <p>The annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman is also reported to the <a href="#">Finance &amp; Audit Committee</a> and therefore is made public through the publication of the report in the agenda.</p> <p>Details of the Kent Code of Conduct adopted by the council are available on the council's website <a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=383&amp;MID=1919#AI10928">http://gravesham-nt37/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=383&amp;MID=1919#AI10928</a>.</p> <p>The Code sets out rules about how Members should behave and also requires them to disclose any personal interests they have. As such, the council's website directs all person's with a complaint regarding a councillor to contact the Monitoring Officer with relevant details about the complaints procedure held on the council's webpage:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/councillor-complaints">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/councillor-complaints</a></p>

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Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.</i>		
<p>Decide how value for money (VFM) is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively.</p> <p>Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear corporate requirement and instruction on how to measure Vfm.</li> <li>• Corporate procurement strategy and policy.</li> <li>• Comparison of information on the authority's economy, efficiency and effectiveness of services with that provided by similar organisations.</li> <li>• Evidence that the results are reflected in the authority's performance plans and in reviewing the work of the authority.</li> </ul>	<p>In the "The Audit Findings" Report published by Grant Thornton and presented to the Finance &amp; Audit Committee in September 2014, the District Auditor stated:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"On the basis of our work, and having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission, we are satisfied that in all significant respects the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2014."</i></p> <p>Whilst this statement does relate to the 2013-14 financial year, the council has continued to build upon its arrangements to ensure that the council is measuring and monitoring value for money.</p> <p>In addition, the council has continued in its comprehensive 'Service Review' programme (which commenced in January 2014) with the aim of reviewing all of the council's services in order to determine if the services are being delivered in the most efficient way. The findings from the programme of reviews will have a significant bearing on the shape of services in future years, with the process of securing value for money for local residents at the forefront of any decisions.</p> <p>Underpinning the use of resources for frontline service delivery, the council has an effective <a href="#">Corporate Procurement Strategy</a> which acts as the foundation on which the authority's approach to procurement is based:</p> <p>Throughout 2014-15 all council reports have been drafted with explicit consideration of the financial implications of any decision to be addressed along with any implications on the Corporate Plan objectives and Section 17 of the Crime &amp; Disorder Act. Therefore any decisions that would impact on Strategic Objective 3 – <i>A clean and green environment</i>, would be identified through this report as would any 'Section 17' implications, which may impact on the broader health of the local environment.</p>

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

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.</i>		
Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published job descriptions for the leader of the authority and chief executive.</li> <li>• Member/officer protocol.</li> <li>• Constitution.</li> </ul>	<p>The council's Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Executive. The Constitution is periodically reviewed, updated and re-issued to ensure that it remains up to date and reflective of the council's structure.</p> <p>The Constitution was subject to a review by an internal 'Task and Finish' group in 2014-15 with the revised Articles of the Constitution adopted by Full Council in February 2015. The intent is to secure formal Full Council adoption of the remainder of the Constitution in 2015-16.</p> <p>Confirmation of the arrangements in respect of the Cabinet was published at <a href="#">Annual Council</a> in May 2014:</p> <p>The council's current Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of the other Members and senior officers (Annex 1): <a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p>
<i>Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority elected members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard.</i>		
Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme of delegation reviewed at least annually in the light of legal and organisational changes.</li> <li>• Standing orders and financial regulations which are reviewed on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<p>A scheme of delegation is in place and is held within Annex 1 of the Constitution and has been re-issued during 2014-15:</p> <p><a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p>

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Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory provisions.</li> <li>• Conditions of employment.</li> <li>• Up-to-date job descriptions.</li> <li>• Appraisal arrangements.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has appointed a full-time Chief Executive who is also the Head of Paid Service. The council's Constitution (Annex 1 - Section 1.12 – Proper Officers) sets out the responsibilities of the Chief Executive:</p> <p><a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p>
<p>Develop protocols to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job descriptions</li> <li>• Chief Executive and leader pairing consider how best to establish and maintain effective communication.</li> </ul>	<p>The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council have weekly one-to-one meetings. Their offices are also situated next door to each other which allows for regular communication as is required. In addition, the Leader also has regular one-to-one meetings with various other officers from across the council to ensure that key issues and projects are managed at both an officer and Member level appropriately.</p>
<p>Make a senior officer (the S151 Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 151 responsibilities.</li> <li>• Statutory provision.</li> <li>• Up-to-date job descriptions.</li> <li>• Compliance with the <i>CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government</i> and has reported on it accordingly in its annual governance statement.</li> </ul>	<p>The council's Section 151 Officer is the Assistant Director (Finance) and the Deputy Section 151 Officer is the Service Manager (Finance). The Constitution of the council sets out the duties of the council's Section 151 Officer within Annex 1 (Section 1.12 – Proper Officers) as the Proper Officer - administration of the council's financial affairs in line with Section 151 Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p><a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p> <p>In addition, the Section 151 Officer is a permanent member of the council's Management Team to provide financial advice and guidance in all decisions taken by the council's Management.</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has completed a specific 'Chief Financial Officer' assurance statement which set out how the council has complied with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government, as well as how the council has met its Section 151 obligations as set out within the Constitution.</p>

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Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>[continued]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The authority has complied with the <i>CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations</i> and has reported on it accordingly in its annual governance statement.</li> </ul>	<p>In line with the revised guidance issued by CIPFA in 2012, a specific assurance statement has been completed by the Assistant Director (Corporate Performance) to demonstrate how the council has complied with the <i>CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations</i>.</p> <p>There were no issues of concern raised by either the Chief Financial Officer or the Head of Internal Audit.</p>
<p>Make a senior officer (usually the Monitoring Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring Officer provisions.</li> <li>Statutory provisions.</li> <li>Up-to-date Job descriptions.</li> </ul>	<p>The council's Constitution sets out the duties of the council's Monitoring Officer who is also the Assistant Director (Governance and Law). This is detailed in Annex 1 (Section 1.13 - Functions delegated to officers of the Council).</p> <p><a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%20%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%20%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489498&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p> <p>In addition, the Monitoring Officer is a permanent member of the council's Management Team to provide legal advice and guidance in all decisions taken by the council's Management.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has also completed a specific assurance statement to demonstrate how their role has effectively been executed during 2014-15.</p>
<p><i>Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.</i></p>		
<p>Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member/officer protocol.</li> </ul>	<p>The council operates a Cabinet Committee Structure which allows for regular Member/Officer briefings between the Lead Member and deputy Chairs of these committees and relevant officers of the council.</p> <p>Regular one-to-one meetings are held between Directors, Assistant Directors and Lead Members as well as shadow members (as necessary). Regular Portfolio meetings are also held.</p> <p>The council's <a href="#">Constitution</a> sets out a Member/Officer protocol for communication (Annex 3). This is to be re-issued in 2015-16.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of Members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme for member remuneration and allowances.</li> <li>• Robust pay and conditions policies and practices for employees.</li> <li>• Structured pay scales reflecting competence.</li> <li>• Established process for grading and appeals procedure.</li> </ul>	<p>The <a href="#">Constitution</a> sets out the protocol for Members Allowances Scheme (Annex 4). This is to be re-visited by Members in 2015-16 via the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).</p> <p>In addition, the council continues to be committed to the government's transparency agenda. A specific web page has been created in order to enable the publication of a number of key data sets and pieces of information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Staff Salaries;</li> <li>• Organisation chart;</li> <li>• Council expenditure;</li> <li>• New contracts and procurement information;</li> <li>• Procurement and contracts data; and</li> <li>• Pay Policy Statement.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/transparency-in-local-government">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/transparency-in-local-government</a></p> <p>In addition, the council is part of the National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales scheme.</p>
<p>Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key performance indicators have been established and approved for each service element and included in the service plan and are reported regularly.</li> <li>• Reports include detailed performance results and highlight areas where corrective action is necessary.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has adopted a suite of performance measures (measures of accountability) and information only indicators in order to assist both the Members, officers and the public in determining the quality of the council's services and commitment to the Corporate Plan (mid-term review) objectives.</p> <p>The performance data has been reported on a quarterly basis to each of the Cabinet Committees, with an 'Exception' report being made available to the council's Management Team and then Cabinet to report those measures of accountability performing below target or demonstrating a downward trend.</p> <p>In addition, to support individual services, management performance indicators are established and recorded in each individual Business Plan in order to monitor the operational aspect of services.</p>

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Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business and financial planning processes established to deliver strategic objectives.</li> <li>• Protocols for consultation.</li> <li>• Statutory guidance is followed.</li> </ul>	<p>In view of the current plan running until 2015, in November 2014 the council instigated a formal review process with the aim of establishing a set of new corporate objectives that take account of the borough's changing needs and the financial climate facing local government.</p> <p>The initial review stage was a public consultation event which was delivered between November 2014 and January 2015 and saw 456 participants provide details of their priorities for the borough into the 2015-19 period.</p> <p>The later stages of the review process including the identification of key strategic objectives and a revised performance reporting framework will be delivered in 2015-16 and will be formulated in consideration of the priorities of the new council executive following the 2015 local elections. The new Corporate Plan is to be presented to Full Council for adoption in October 2015.</p>
<p>When working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority.</p> <p>Ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership.</p> <p>Ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.</p>	<p>Protocols for partnership working mean that for each partnership there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a clear statement of the partnerships principles and objectives;</li> <li>• clarity of each partners role;</li> <li>• definition of roles of partnership board members;</li> <li>• line management responsibilities for staff who support the partnership;</li> <li>• clear accountability for proper financial administration;</li> <li>• a protocol for dispute resolution.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has in place a robust Working in Partnership Framework which is the central point of reference in developing new partnerships for the council. This was updated and subsequently approved by the <a href="#">Cabinet</a> in February 2014 and was available for referral throughout 2014-15.</p> <p>The Working in Partnership Framework includes a thorough Partnership Evaluation Form which must have Director and Lead Member approval (and Cabinet approval dependent on the significance of the partnership). In addition, the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer also provide their financial and legal perspectives on any new partnership prior to sign-off. The evaluation form utilised specifically requires officers to detail the contributions the partnership will make towards assisting the council in achieving its corporate objectives but also the outcome that we can expect to see for our community. This information is then duly reflected in the council's Corporate Register of Partnerships.</p> <p>The council publishes a <i>Corporate Register of Partnerships</i> on its website which was reviewed and published in October 2014. This document provides details of all of the partnerships the council is actively involved in along with details of the aims and objectives of the partnerships and the governance arrangements to support the partnership:  <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/partnership-working">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/partnership-working</a></p> <p>The Working in Partnership Framework will be reviewed in 2015-16 following the adoption of the new Corporate Plan and associated priorities.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

**Principle Three: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.**

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.</i>		
<p>Ensure the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codes of conduct, annual governance statement.</li> <li>• Conduct at meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>The Wider Management Team meetings have continued which consist of the Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors and Service Managers, with meetings held once a month. Information from these meetings is then disseminated to officers within the departments through the Performance Management Framework arrangement. In addition, the agendas and minutes of all Management Team meetings are accessible to the entire Wider Management Team to ensure that all senior managers are up-to-date with the work that is being undertaken across the authority.</p> <p>Regular team meetings, one-to-ones and appraisals also take place to ensure consistent messages are delivered across the organisation.</p> <p>Regular meetings are held between the Leader and a number of key officers throughout the organisation, including the Chief Executive, Directors, Section 151 Officer and Service Managers. Through these meetings the Leader is able to ensure that he is kept up-to-date on key projects and issues and provide the leadership direction of such projects and issues as required. Other Lead Members also hold briefings with a number of officers that provide the services within their remit to ensure there is an understanding of both officer and Member needs throughout the organisation.</p> <p>A new staff suggestion scheme has also been implemented (led by the Assistant Director (Corporate Performance)) to enable staff to make suggestions about how the council can work towards achieving the required financial savings over the coming years. The findings from this exercise feed into the research work undertaken through the Service Review project. Officers who partake in this opportunity are subsequently responded to in order to ensure recognition and transparency are actively promoted in the authority.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members/officers code of conduct which acknowledges professional bodies' codes of conduct.</li> <li>• Performance appraisal.</li> <li>• Complaints procedures.</li> <li>• Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies are up to date and working effectively.</li> <li>• Induction of new members and staff on standards of behaviour expected.</li> </ul>	<p>A Code of Conduct for Employees is in place which has been communicated to officers of the council via the NETconsent system. For those officers without access to the system, Managers have been responsible for ensuring all of their teams are aware of and have signed up to the relevant policies of the council.</p> <p>A Code of Conduct for Members is in place and is communicated at Annex 3.2 of the Constitution. This is to be re-issued in 2015-16.</p> <p><a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Codes%20of%20Practice%20%20Protocols&amp;ID=1872&amp;RPID=7489546&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Codes%20of%20Practice%20%20Protocols&amp;ID=1872&amp;RPID=7489546&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p> <p>The council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Whistleblowing Policy are all available on the council's website and have been distributed to officers via the NETconsent system and through the manual sign-up process for those operatives who do not have access to a computer. The council's website also host the Housing &amp; Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy for referral:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/fraud">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/fraud</a></p> <p>The council also has an <a href="#">Anti-Money Laundering Policy</a> which was rolled-out to all employees in 2014 and is due for review and re-submission to officers in 2015-16.</p>
<p>Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias, or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.</p> <p>Put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing orders, financial regulations and codes of conduct, all reviewed and updated on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Register of interests (members and staff).</li> <li>• Provision of ethical awareness training.</li> <li>• Procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest.</li> </ul>	<p>As above, there is a Code of Conduct for both officers and Members.</p> <p>The council holds a 'Register of Interests' by which both officers and Members must declare any item in which they may have an interest or which they may be perceived as having an interest which may influence their decision making ability. The council has in place a Gifts and Hospitality register which is updated as required by officers. Reminder e-mails are sent each year to officers and Members to ensure they are registering all gifts correctly.</p> <p>The Constitution sets out the Procedure Rules (Annex 2) to be followed and also the responsibilities of Members and the scheme of delegation. The Procedure Rules include Rules of Debate and Financial procedures.</p> <p><a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%20%20Procedural%20Rules&amp;ID=1819&amp;RPID=7489547&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%20%20Procedural%20Rules&amp;ID=1819&amp;RPID=7489547&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>[continued]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to date register of gifts and hospitality.</li> </ul>	<p>All Members and senior managers are asked to declare any 'Related Party Transactions' whereby they declare an interest of materiality in partnerships or organisations that the council provides funds to. These are completed on an annual basis and are formally declared in the Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>In addition, 'Declarations of Interest' are included as a standing item on all committee agendas.</p>
<i>Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.</i>		
<p>Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Codes of conduct.</li> <li>Evidence of communicating shared values with members, staff, the community and partners.</li> <li>Whistleblowing arrangements are in place and protect individuals raising concerns.</li> </ul>	<p>To deliver relevant outcomes for local residents, the council's Corporate Plan 2011-15 (mid-term review) sets out five clear strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Community Well-being;</i></li> <li><i>Housing;</i></li> <li><i>A clean and green environment;</i></li> <li><i>Economic development and regeneration; and</i></li> <li><i>Managing the council's business responsibly.</i></li> </ul> <p>Underpinning all of the council's work is a commitment to '<i>Connecting with the Community</i>' and ensuring its leadership is informed by the community itself.</p> <p>To effectively communicate the council's Corporate Plan, the document is made available to all staff and residents via the council's website and in 2014-15 formed part of the corporate suite of policy documents that are identified as being formal reading for all council staff.</p> <p>Regular promotion of the council's key priorities was also undertaken during the year with quarterly updates on performance through the <i>Your Borough</i> publications and publication of the updates on the council's website.</p> <p>More broadly, the council's business planning process specifically links in the activities of the individual departments, and ultimately those of individuals, with the strategic objectives of the council providing a 'golden thread', an understanding of how each officer contributes to the delivery of the council's vision.</p> <p>In concern of governance values, as detailed previously the council has put in place robust Code of Conduct for employees and Members supported by the Whistleblowing Policy to encourage and enable individuals to raise concerns within the council, without fear of reprisals.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codes of conduct.</li> </ul>	<p>All committee reports require the implications of a decision to be considered with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal implications</li> <li>• Financial implications</li> <li>• Risk management implications</li> <li>• An assessment of equalities impact</li> <li>• Links to the Corporate Plan objectives</li> <li>• Crime and Disorder (section 17) implications</li> </ul> <p>This ensures that both the council's Management Team and Members are able to make fully-informed decision with all of the relevant implications considered accordingly.</p> <p>In addition, the council has continued to operate specific Corporate Working Groups during 2014-15 to ensure a consistent approach to all initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Systems Development Corporate Working Group has established a project management approach to ensure all projects follow a robust process.</li> <li>• The Welfare Reform Corporate Working Group has been liaising to implement and monitor the impacts of the changes to the welfare reform agenda on both the council and its residents.</li> <li>• The Elections Corporate Working Group has worked together to streamline the internal processes related to the conducting of elections.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to this, the council's Internal Audit Team has also been involved in system design work throughout the year.</p>
<p>Develop and maintain an effective standards committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference.</li> <li>• Regular reporting to full Council.</li> <li>• Examples of responding to complaints about behaviour.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has a Standards Committee in place which was established in 2012-13 to reflect the changes to the standards regime brought about by the Localism Act 2012. Minutes of the Standards Committee are reported to Full Council as required. There have been no complaints against Members in 2014-15.</p> <p>Details of the Kent Code of Conduct adopted by the council are available on the council's website <a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=383&amp;MID=1919#AI10928">http://gravesham-nt37/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=383&amp;MID=1919#AI10928</a>. The Code sets out rules about how Members should behave and also requires them to disclose any personal interests they have. As such, the council's website directs all person's with a complaint regarding a councillor to contact the Monitoring Officer with relevant details about the complaints procedure held on the council's <a href="#">corporate complaints webpage</a>.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Use the organisation's shared values to act as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making practices.</li> <li>• Evidence that shared values have guided the decision making.</li> </ul>	<p>The monthly Wider Management Team has continued and is attended by Management Team, Assistant Directors and Service Managers. The purpose of the Wider Management Team is to encourage and develop working relationships within the authority, share knowledge and information and engage all tiers of Management in corporate issues.</p> <p>Regular meetings are held between the Leader and a number of key officers throughout the organisation, including the Chief Executive, Directors, Section 151 Officer and Service Managers. Other Lead Members also hold briefings with a number of officers that provide the services within their remit to ensure there is an understanding of both officer and Member needs throughout the organisation.</p> <p>In addition, the Leader has established a number of Cross-party Working groups to work on specific projects for the council such as the preparations for Christmas 2014 and plans for the Borough Market.</p>
<p>In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols for partnership working.</li> <li>• Evidence of agreed values.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has in place a robust Working in Partnership Framework which is utilised in developing new partnerships for the council. This includes a thorough Partnership Evaluation Form which must have Director and lead Member approval (and Cabinet approval dependent on the significance of the partnership).</p> <p>The council's Corporate Register of Partnerships provides a summary of all of the council's partnerships including shared aims and objectives:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/partnership-working">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/partnership-working</a></p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

### Principle Four: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny</i>		
Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of and responsibility for scrutiny have been established.</li> <li>Agenda and minutes of scrutiny meetings.</li> <li>Evidence of improvements to proposals as a result of scrutiny.</li> <li>An effective internal audit function is resourced and maintained.</li> </ul>	<p>Annex 1 of the Constitution sets out the responsibilities of the council and the responsibilities delegated to committees hence it sets out the responsibility of the Overview Scrutiny committee.</p> <p>The council's website has specific pages set up to outline the role of both the Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>Overview Scrutiny Committee - <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/scrutiny">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/councillors-and-committees/scrutiny</a></p> <p>Crime &amp; Disorder Scrutiny Committee - <a href="http://gravesham-nt37/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=355">http://gravesham-nt37/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=355</a></p> <p>A 'library' of the Scrutiny reviews undertaken is also published on the council's website: <a href="http://web.gravesham.gov.uk/democracy/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=489&amp;path=480">http://web.gravesham.gov.uk/democracy/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=489&amp;path=480</a></p> <p>The Overview Scrutiny Committee meets on a monthly basis, ensuring that the meetings are held on a regular basis to enable the Scrutiny function to be effective. The committee is chaired by the Leader of the Opposition and the committee is able to 'call-in' decisions from the Cabinet in order for them to be further scrutinised if the committee so wishes.</p>
Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and consideration on which decisions are based.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision making protocols.</li> <li>Records of decision and supporting materials.</li> <li>Record of professional advice in reaching decisions.</li> </ul>	<p>Decisions by committees are recorded through committee minutes and are published on the council's website.</p> <p>All committee reports include an appendix which sets out the 'implications' of the decisions being recommended through the report and cover legal, financial, risks, equalities, corporate plan objectives and crime and disorder (section 17) implications.</p> <p>Performance Management Framework meetings between officers and Members are also formally minuted by the use of a standard minutes template which enables for decisions and actions to be recorded formally.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members' and officers' code of conduct which refers to a requirement to declare interests.</li> <li>• Minutes showing declarations of interest were sought and appropriate declarations made.</li> </ul>	<p>The council holds a 'Register of Interests' by which both officers and Members must declare any item in which they may have an interest or which they may be perceived as having an interest which may influence their decision making ability.</p> <p>All Members and senior managers are asked to declare any 'Related Party Transactions' whereby they declare an interest of materiality in partnerships or organisations that the council provides funds to. These are completed on an annual basis and are formally declared in the Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>As previously detailed, there is a Code of Conduct for both employees and Members. The officers Code of Conduct is distributed out via the NETconsent software system for formal officer sign-off. Members are issued with the Code of Conduct for Members which is also available in the 'Member's' Area of the Civic Centre.</p>
<p>Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the scrutiny function or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference.</li> <li>• Membership.</li> <li>• Training for committee members.</li> </ul>	<p>As previously detailed, Annex 1 of the Constitution sets out the responsibilities of the council and the responsibilities delegated to committees hence it sets out the responsibility of the Finance and Audit Committee.</p> <p>Specific training is provided to Members of the Finance &amp; Audit Committee throughout the year, particularly in relation to financial issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 July 2014 Statement of Accounts Training</li> </ul> <p>In addition, a specific handbook is provided for Members of the Finance &amp; Audit Committee to assist them in fulfilling their role on the committee.</p> <p>In 2015-16, relevant training is to be provided for Members of the Finance &amp; Audit Committee to complement the Member's Induction Process due to start following the local elections in May 2015.</p>
<p>Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints procedure.</li> <li>• Evidence of changes/ improvements as a result of complaints received and acted upon.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has in place a Corporate Customer Service Charter which makes clear the corporate standards customers can expect to receive. The Charter was issued to all council officers in November 2014 as part of the corporate suite of policy documents that are identified as being formal reading for all council staff.</p> <p>The Charter sets out how the council will address reports of service failures and complaints from members of the public. The council's website hosts specific details of the corporate complaints procedure alongside details of the Local Government Ombudsman:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/complaints-compliments/2">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/complaints-compliments/2</a></p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.</i>		
<p>Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion between Members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making.</li> <li>• Agreement on the information that will be provided and the timescales.</li> <li>• Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports that are adhered to.</li> </ul>	<p>There are financial reporting arrangements in place by which Members receive regular updates on the budget situation at the council.</p> <p>All committee reports include an appendix which sets out the ‘implications’ of the decisions being recommended through the report and cover legal, financial, risks, equalities, corporate business plan and crime and disorder (section 17) implications.</p> <p>Performance information is presented to Members on a quarterly basis; the Cabinet receive ‘exception’ reports on a quarterly basis to highlight those measures of accountability performing below target or demonstrating a downward trend. In addition, the Cabinet Committees received updates in relation to all areas of focus and measures of accountability within the remit of the committee to ensure they were kept up-to-date on the work of the council. Key officers attend all committee meetings in order to respond to any questions Members may have.</p> <p>Monthly Policy briefings are provided to the council’s Wider Management team which provide a summary of all recent policy announcements and consultations from central government. In addition, this is supplemented by a half-yearly legislative briefing which is discussed at Management Team so that the progress of significant legislative changes introduced by the government is monitored. In addition, the Corporate Register of Partnerships provides details of how each of the partnerships is reporting information in respect of performance and finance.</p>
<p>Ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and is used appropriately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The authority has complied with the <i>CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government</i> and has reported on it accordingly in its annual governance statement.</li> <li>• Record of decision making and supporting materials.</li> <li>• Meeting reports show details of advice given.</li> </ul>	<p>The Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer both attend all Management Team meetings (or nominated deputies as required). All reports that have a financial and/or legal implication must be discussed with these statutory officers prior to being presented to Management Team or Members. The appendix to support the reports has specific sections on legal and financial implications and therefore advice from these officers can be recorded in these sections as required.</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer has completed a specific ‘Chief Financial Officer’ assurance statement which sets out how the council has complied with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government, as well as how the council has met its Section 151 obligations as set out within the Constitution. There were no issues or concerns identified through this statement.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.</i>		
<p>Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk management protocol.</li> <li>• Risk management strategy/policy has been formally approved and adopted and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Financial standards and regulations.</li> <li>• Counter-fraud arrangements are in place and operating effectively.</li> </ul>	<p>An annual review is undertaken of both the council's Risk Management Strategy and the Corporate Risk Register.</p> <p>In March 2011 it was agreed by Cabinet that the Risk Management Strategy would only be presented for approval if it was subject to updates and amendments resulting in material changes to the strategy. The review conducted in 2014-15 identified that no updates were required to the Strategy and this was reported to Cabinet in March 2015.</p> <p>The 2013-14 Annual Governance Statement identified risk management training as a control issue to be addressed for senior officers. As such, in 2014-15 two sessions of Risk Management training were delivered, incorporating a Risk Identification Exercise from which the Corporate Risk Register for 2015-16 was generated. Whilst the Strategic Risks facing the council were not considered to have changed from 2014-15, opportunity was taken to reflect on the risks facing the council and review the way in which these are presented in the Register. The Corporate Risk register for the council was approved by Cabinet in March 2015.</p> <p>The Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register are available on the council's website: <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/risk-management">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/corporate-governance/risk-management</a></p> <p>In addition to the Corporate Risk register, each service area must consider business risks as part of the Business Planning process.</p> <p>All committee reports include an appendix which sets out the 'implications' of the decisions being recommended through the report specifically including an assessment of risk. This is to ensure that risk is considered in all decisions that are made by the council. This appendix is also included in formal reports to Management Team as well as Members.</p> <p>Into 2015-16, Risk Management training will be provided as part of the Member Induction process for all Members elected at the local elections in May 2015.</p> <p>The council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Whistleblowing Policy are all available on the council's website and have been distributed to officers via the NETconsent system and through the manual sign-up process for those operatives who do not have access to a computer. The council's website also hosts the Housing &amp; Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy for referral:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/fraud">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/fraud</a></p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for whistle-blowing to which officers, staff and all those contracting with the authority have access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A whistleblowing policy exists and is reviewed on a regular basis.</li> <li>• The policy has been made available to members of the public, employees, partners and contractors.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has a Whistleblowing Policy in place which is available on the council's website along with all other fraud related policies and guidance to encourage and enable individuals to raise concerns within the council, without fear of reprisals:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/fraud">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/fraud</a></p> <p>Through the assurance statements that are completed as part of the annual review process, all senior managers have confirmed that staff are aware of and have access to the Whistleblowing policy of the council circulated to officers via the NETconsent software.</p> <p>In addition, Members are made aware of the council's Whistleblowing Policy with any changes identified following a review reported through to Cabinet for approval.</p>
<p><i>Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.</i></p>		
<p>Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution.</li> <li>• Monitoring Officer provisions.</li> <li>• Statutory provisions.</li> </ul>	<p>Responsibilities for statutory obligations are outlined in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Articles of the Constitution – Officers of the Council <a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD2228&amp;ID=2228&amp;RPID=7828970&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD2228&amp;ID=2228&amp;RPID=7828970&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></li> <li>• Annex 1 to the Constitution – Responsibility for functions <a href="http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489585&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481">http://gravesham-nt37/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=Annex%201%20-%20Responsibility%20for%20Functions&amp;ID=1931&amp;RPID=7489585&amp;sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480%2c481</a></li> </ul>
<p>Recognise the limit of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of legal advice provided by officers.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has an account with HMSO alongside other providers to provide a copy of all legislative changes which impact on District Councils. All legislative changes are distributed to Senior Officers as deemed necessary.</p> <p>The employment of professional officers in Senior Posts helps to ensure that departments also become aware of relevant legislative change which may impact on their operations.</p> <p>The Constitution is periodically reviewed to refresh the document in line with relevant legislative requirements. In 2014-15 an internal 'task and finish' group of officers was established to comprehensively review the Constitution. The initial changes made to the Constitution's Articles were adopted by Full Council in <a href="#">February 2015</a>. The remainder of the Constitution is due for presentation to Full Council for adoption in 2015-16.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>[continued]</i>		<p>All committee reports include an appendix which sets out the 'implications' of the decisions being recommended through the report specifically including an assessment of legal issues including legislative implications. This is to ensure that legal issues are considered in all decisions that are made by the council.</p> <p>In addition, the Monitoring Officer is a permanent member of the council's Management Team to provide legal advice and guidance in all decisions taken by the council's Management.</p> <p>All reports to either Management Team or the Member Committees also require any legal implications to have been considered and detailed in the report to enable robust decision-making.</p>
<p>Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into their procedures and decision making processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring Officer provisions.</li> <li>• Statutory provisions.</li> <li>• Job descriptions.</li> </ul>	<p>Responsibilities for statutory obligations are outlined in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Articles of the Constitution – Officers of the Council</li> <li>• Annex 1 to the Constitution – Responsibility for functions</li> </ul> <p>The Constitution is periodically reviewed to identify where it does not comply with legislative requirements.</p> <p>The employment of professional officers in Senior Posts helps to ensure that departments also become aware of relevant legislative change which may impact on their operations.</p> <p>In addition, all committee reports include a specific section where consideration must be given to any 'Legal Implications' in order to ensure they are considered in decision-making.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

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

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.</i>		
Provide induction programmes tailored to individuals' needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and development plan.</li> <li>• Induction programme.</li> <li>• Access to update courses/information/briefings on new legislation.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has an induction checklist which covers generic corporate issues and is completed for all new starters. The process also includes the distribution of Corporate policies identified for reading and formal sign-off. This ensures that new starters not only receive service specific training but get an understanding of the corporate organisation as well. In addition, the council has also introduced a staff handbook which is provided to all new members of staff and outlines the code of conduct and other key information.</p> <p>In addition, specific inductions are arranged for those officers who are front-line. Those officers working within the operational services aspects of the council's service (refuse collectors, street cleansers etc.) go through a specific induction programme which is tailored to their roles within the council prior to commencing their activities.</p> <p>In addition, all officers that are undertaking shared or joint-working initiatives at GBC must go through a 'Shared Services Induction' checklist.</p> <p>Appraisals are carried out every year for all officers and half-yearly reviews are also carried out as required. Through this, officers are able to highlight any additional training needs they require. These can also be picked up through the regular one-to-ones that occur during the year.</p> <p>The council has a Member training programme which has been in place for a number of years. In 2014-15, training has been provided in relation to; Statement of Accounts, Roma Awareness, Troubled Families programme, Internal Drainage Districts, Planning Updates and Regulatory Board refresh, and Planning Design ('Design in a Nutshell').</p>
Ensure that statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job descriptions.</li> <li>• Membership of top management team.</li> </ul>	<p>The responsibilities of the three statutory officers (Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer) are clearly laid out in the council's Constitution. The duties of the council's 'Proper Officers' are also set out within the Constitution.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.</i>		
<p>Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training development plan.</li> <li>• Performance reviews of officers and Members.</li> </ul>	<p>Training needs are identified through the annual appraisal process. Training needs will also be identified through the Performance Management Framework, probation reviews for new starters at 1, 3 and 5 months and through other arrangements such as mentoring.</p> <p>The council has a defined training budget available which covers qualification training, non-qualification training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This enables the council to respond to training needs which come about not only through staff turnover and continued development, but also changes in legislation, such as the requirement for persons involved in civil enforcement to be properly qualified.</p> <p>A number of training sessions were provided for Members throughout 2014-15. In total, six training sessions were held in order to provide Members with specific training to assist them in their role but to also raise Member awareness of changes to council services.</p>
<p>Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed.</p>	<p>Training and development plan reflect the requirements of a modern councillor, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ability to scrutinise and challenge;</li> <li>• the ability to recognise when outside advice is required;</li> <li>• advice on how to act as an ambassador for the community; and</li> <li>• leadership and influencing skills.</li> </ul>	<p>As previously detailed, tailored training is provided to Members involved in key committees such as the Finance &amp; Audit Committee and the Regulatory Board as required.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or developmental needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance management system.</li> <li>• Staff development plans linked to staff appraisals.</li> </ul>	<p>Informal arrangements are in place through Committee Service officers attending meetings with new Members and are reviewed on an on-going basis.</p> <p>More broadly the council's Performance Management process includes formal reporting of the progress made by the council against its objectives via quarterly updates to the relevant Cabinet Committees and the Performance Management Framework including the appraisal process and associated training plans for officers.</p>
<p><i>Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made in individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal</i></p>		
<p>Ensure that effective arrangements have been designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic partnership framework.</li> <li>• Stakeholders forums terms of reference.</li> <li>• Area forums roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Residents panel structure.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2014-15 the council continued to work on its commitment to 'Connect with the Community' and fulfil the Community Pledge.</p> <p>The council has a number of community engagement initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood Forums (East, West and Rural);</li> <li>• Gravesham Youth Council;</li> <li>• Residents Panel;</li> <li>• Residents' Association meetings;</li> <li>• 50+ Forum; and</li> <li>• Business Networking events</li> </ul> <p>The above are a selection of the consultation and engagement activities undertaken across the council over the year.</p> <p>The council also has a Community Cohesion Corporate Working Group which is attended by colleagues from the Kent Equality Cohesion Council, which assists in ensuring the council's community cohesion activities are representative of the diverse Gravesham community.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession planning.</li> </ul>	<p>The council has had a Workforce Development Plan in place since 2005. The plan has always had a focus on management development and succession planning but the revised plan brought together corporate strategies and policies and identified the key priorities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational development;</li> <li>• Leadership development;</li> <li>• Skills Development;</li> <li>• Recruitment &amp; retention; and</li> <li>• Pay &amp; rewards.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, each year Service Managers provide a detailed plan for their own individual services within their Service Business Plan and the council has a number of officers on professional training qualification such as in accounting and internal audit.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

### Principle Six: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<i>Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive and accountability relationships</i>		
<p>Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>To work towards this vision and ultimately deliver relevant outcomes for local residents, the council's Corporate Plan 2011-15 (mid-term review) sets out five clear strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community Well-being;</i></li> <li>• <i>Housing;</i></li> <li>• <i>A clean and green environment;</i></li> <li>• <i>Economic development and regeneration; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Managing the council's business responsibly.</i></li> </ul> <p>Underpinning all of the council's work is a commitment to '<i>Connecting with the Community</i>' and ensuring its leadership is informed by the community itself.</p> <p>To effectively communicate the council's Corporate Plan, the document is made available to all staff and residents via the council's website and in 2014-15 formed part of the corporate suite of policy documents that are identified as being formal reading for all council staff.</p> <p>More broadly, the council's business planning process specifically links in the activities of the individual departments, and ultimately those of individuals, with the strategic objectives of the council providing a 'golden thread', an understanding of how each officer contributes to the delivery of the council's vision.</p> <p>Accountability and scrutiny of the council's progress is via the performance reporting process. In 2014-15 performance data was reported on a quarterly basis to each of the Cabinet Committees, with an 'Exception' report being made available to Cabinet. Subsequently, this information has then been published on the council's website via the council's performance management system:</p> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance</a></p> <p>In addition during the year quarterly performance updates were reported to the community through the <i>Your Borough</i> publications and publication of the updates on the council's website.</p> <p>In 2014-15 preparations for the council's next Corporate Plan has seen a formal engagement programme offering residents and partner agencies the opportunity to advise the council on the value they place on individual services with 456 responses.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a database of stakeholders with whom the authority should engage and for what purpose and a record of an assessment of the effectiveness of any changes.</li> </ul>	<p>One of the key aspects of the council's work is engaging with the community, and this is one of the key measures of accountability for the council.</p> <p>The council has a Residents Panel which provides a core group of residents to consult with. In addition, the council has a number of established consultation groups, such as the 50+ Forum and the Gravesham Youth Council enabling a broad range of representation. This is supported by Member engagement through the Community Gateways. In addition, the council has very strong links with the Kent Equality Cohesion Council, providing another avenue for engagement with different community groups in the borough.</p> <p>The purpose of these activities is to test council policies and service delivery with the community to ensure representative and informed decisions are ultimately taken.</p> <p>The council also engages with its statutory organisation partners, such as central government departments as required.</p>
<p>Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report.</li> </ul>	<p>Reports are produced following the completion of each piece of review work by the Scrutiny Committee. At present, there is no overall annual report produced.</p> <p><a href="http://web.gravesham.gov.uk/democracy/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=489&amp;path=480">http://web.gravesham.gov.uk/democracy/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=489&amp;path=480</a></p>
<p><i>Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning.</i></p>		
<p>Ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, including monitoring arrangements, and ensure that they operate effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community strategy.</li> <li>Citizen survey.</li> </ul>	<p>As previously detailed, the council has a number of community engagement initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbourhood Forums (East, West and Rural);</li> <li>Gravesham Youth Council;</li> <li>Residents Panel; and</li> <li>50+ Forum.</li> </ul> <p>The above are a selection of the consultation and engagement activities undertaken across the council over the year.</p> <p>In 2014-15, the council continued its programme of 'co-optees' whereby community representatives attend Cabinet committees offering the local community a direct say on council initiatives and service delivery.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of public consultations.</li> <li>• Processes for dealing with competing demands within the community.</li> </ul>	<p>As detailed above, the council has been actively engaging with residents and partner agencies through a number of different avenues during 2014-15. Supporting that process, the council has good relationships with the Kent Equality Cohesion Council (KECC) and the Council For Voluntary Service North West Kent (CVSNWK) who are actively engaged in a variety of community engagement activities and events.</p> <p>All council committee meetings are held in the public. On some occasions, some items are excluded from the public but this is done so in line with the rules set out in the Constitution.</p>
<p>Establish a clear policy on the types of issues on which they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership framework.</li> <li>• Communication strategy.</li> </ul>	<p>As previously detailed, the council is committed to engaging with its communities. The three Neighbourhood Forums are used to discuss specific topics with the relevant areas of the borough, details of which are provided on the council's website and in advance in the local areas: <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/neighbourhood-partnerships">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/neighbourhood-partnerships</a></p> <p>In addition to the forums, the council has a number of other engagement channels already highlighted through this review which are used throughout the year to ensure the community are fully engaged with the council.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Publish an annual performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual report.</li> <li>• Annual financial statements.</li> <li>• Corporate plan.</li> <li>• Annual business plan.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2014-15, the council produced a formal annual report to report back on the 2013-14 financial year, which was approved by Cabinet and reported on the council's website:  <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/annual-report-for-gravesham">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/annual-report-for-gravesham</a></p> <p>In addition, a summary of this was included in the <i>Your Borough</i> magazine that is delivered to all households within the borough.</p> <p>The council also reports details of the year-end performance outturns for all measures of accountability and information only indicators to the <a href="#">Performance and Administration Committee</a>:  Quarterly updates in performance are provided to the relevant Cabinet Committees, with the contextual and numerical updates also published via the Internet Performance Library:  <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/performance/measuring-performance</a></p> <p>The council has a dedicated webpage to the council's financial statements, which are published on an annual basis:  <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/financial-statements">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/financial-statements</a></p> <p>The Civic Budget Book for the council, which sets out the council's budgetary requirements for the year and is agreed annually, is also published on the council's website for public viewing:  <a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/civic-budget-book">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/civic-budget-book</a></p> <p>The External Auditors for the council conduct an annual audit of the council's Statement of Accounts, with their findings published and reported to the <a href="#">Finance &amp; Audit Committee</a>. In addition, the annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman is also considered by the <a href="#">Finance &amp; Audit Committee</a>.</p>

## Annual Review of Governance Arrangements: 2014-15

Requirement	Examples of compliance	Actual Evidence
<p>Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution.</li> <li>• Freedom of information Act publication scheme.</li> <li>• Council Tax leaflet.</li> <li>• Authority website.</li> </ul>	<p>The council's Constitution is available on the council's website within the public access area; <a href="http://web.gravesham.gov.uk/democracy/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480">http://web.gravesham.gov.uk/democracy/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&amp;cat=481&amp;path=480</a></p> <p>This document sets out the decision making processes for the council, the responsibilities of committees in terms of the decisions they can make, the delegated powers that have been given to both Members and Officers and clearly defines those items that should and shouldn't be excluded from the public.</p> <p>The council publishes minutes from all of its public committee meetings on the website.</p> <p>In addition, the council continues to be committed to the government's transparency agenda. A specific web page has been created in order to enable the publication of a number of key data sets and pieces of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Staff Salaries;</li> <li>• Council spending;</li> <li>• New contracts and procurement information; and</li> <li>• Pay Policy Statement.</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/transparency-in-local-government">http://www.gravesham.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/council-budgets-and-spending/transparency-in-local-government</a></p>
<p><i>Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff</i></p>		
<p>Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution.</li> <li>• Adherence to best practice standards in recruitment and staff terms and conditions.</li> </ul>	<p>The Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) is the main tool for staff consultation at Gravesham Borough. The committee exists to provide a two-way dialogue between Council staff and senior management, namely the Chief Executive, Director (Communities) and the HR Manager. UNISON represents staff on the JSCC, however the union is happy to represent non-union members at these meetings.</p>

**The Principles, requirements and expected examples to demonstrate compliance in this review have been taken from *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – guidance note for English authorities, CIPFA/Solace, 2012 edition.***