

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Audit Committee

28th June 2013

Report of: Service Director Finance

Report Title: Code of Corporate Governance

Ward: Citywide

**Officer presenting report: Melanie Henchy-McCarthy/ Alison Mullis, Chief
Internal Auditor(J/S)**

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 92 22063/22448

RECOMMENDATION

1. Members are asked to note the updated Code of Corporate Governance
2. Members are asked to support the proposal to transform the Code of Corporate Governance into an interactive web document

SUMMARY

This report details amendments made to the Council's Code of Corporate Governance to ensure that the Code accurately reflects the current control environment.

The significant issues in the report are:

- updating the Code of Corporate Governance to reflect the governance changes due to the elected mayor and transformational change.

Policy

The Code is based around six principles which were identified in the joint publication by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). Their published guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' identified the essential criteria for the provision of good governance which have been used as the basis for the Code.

Consultation:

Internal: Working group to review the Code that consisted of representatives from Policy, Legal Services, Internal Audit, Portfolio Management Office and Corporate Services.

External: None necessary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A work group consisting of individuals from a variety of governance roles across the Council reviewed the existing Code of Corporate Governance and identified areas where the governance arrangements for the Council had been changed or improved. The outcome from this exercise was a revised Code of Corporate Governance as attached at Appendix A.
- 1.2 The amendments to the Code included an additional paragraph that explained the purpose of the Code and who should be complying with it. It was agreed by the group that this would help staff to understand how the Code relates to their role within the Council.

2. Further Action

- 2.1 The work group recommended that the Code of Corporate Governance should be made into an interactive web document. The Code would then be a one page summary which could be clicked into for more detailed information on the governance controls in the six code areas. This will also enable linking of governance controls to the actual documents being described eg. the Medium Term Financial Plan or regulation such as, Financial or Procurement regulations.
- 2.2 The work group felt that having a brief initial document with more detailed information to click into where desired would encourage more staff engagement in the governance framework.

Other Options Considered

None necessary

Risk Assessment

Publishing a Code of Corporate Governance aides the Council in its responsibility to support an open and transparent approach in its dealing with the Public. Failure to maintain and publish this Code may result in the loss of that opportunity and as such the loss of transparency.

Equalities Impact Assessment

None necessary for this report

Environmental Impact Assessment

None necessary for this report

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal - none sought.

Resources - none arising from this report

Appendices

Appendix A – Code of Corporate Governance – strike out version for ease of identifying amendments.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACCESS TO INFORMATION

'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).



Bristol City Council

~~Local~~ Code of

Corporate Governance

June ~~2012~~2013

Bristol City Council

Local Code of Corporate Governance

Index

<u>Page.</u>	<u>Content</u>
3	What is Corporate Governance
4 - 13	The principles on which the Code is based
13 - 14	Monitoring and Review

Version	Reviewed By:	Review Date
1	Full Council	13 th January 2009
2	Audit and Standards Committees	9 th April 2010
3	Audit and Standards Committees	1st April 2011
4	Audit Committee	29 th June 2012
5	Audit Committee	28th June 2013

1. What is Corporate Governance?

- 1.1 The Corporate Governance framework comprises of the systems and processes, culture and values by which an organisation is directed and controlled. For local authorities this includes how a council relates to the community it serves.
- 1.2 Good Corporate Governance requires the authority to be open, transparent, effective, inclusive of all sectors of the community, accountable to the public it serves and to demonstrate integrity.
- 1.3 This Code is a public statement of the ways in which the Council will achieve good corporate governance.

2. What is the purpose of Bristol City Council's Code of Corporate Governance and who should be complying with it?

- 2.1 By publishing a Code of Corporate Governance, the Council is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring the high quality of its public services.
- 2.2 By promoting the principles of openness, accountability, integrity and effective governance, the Council encourages public trust.
- 2.3 The Code provides the public with greater awareness of the Council's arrangements and equips them with the knowledge to question the Council's plans and actions, thereby becoming more involved in the running of their city.
- 2.4 The Code provides officers with an overview of the Council's governance arrangements and with the principles of good governance that each service and employee should be ensuring are in place.

3. The Principles of Corporate Governance

- 4.4 The Code is based around six principles which were identified in the joint publication by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). Their published guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' identified the following as the essential criteria for the provision of good governance.
 1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
 2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
 3. Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
 4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

5. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective
6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

32.1 Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision of the local area.

23.1.1 The Council will communicate its purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for the citizens and service users by:

- Publishing a three year [Corporate Priorities and](#) Medium Term Financial Plan, which details the key outcomes the Council has for the city of Bristol and its citizens over the period.
- [Communication of the Mayor's Priorities](#)
- Maintaining ~~a Communications Strategy~~[regular communications across multiple media internally and externally.](#)
- Playing a leading role in the: [Children and Young People's Trust Board; Health and Wellbeing Board; and the Safer Bristol Partnership, and its Partnership Boards, and working Board.](#) Working together with strategic partners and citizens to promote Bristol as one of the top twenty cities in Europe with the Bristol 20:20 plan.
- Publishing an Annual Review Report which incorporates performance against key ~~local performance indicators~~[measures.](#)
- Publishing on-line the Council's newsletter on the Bristol City Council website which clearly communicates the vision and priorities of the Council, with web facilities available in libraries for viewing.
- Working in partnership with other Authorities and the business community with shared vision and priorities for the sub-region [in the Local Enterprise Partnership.](#)
- [Developing and engaging with Neighbourhood Partnerships.](#)
- [Operating the 'One Council' Target Operating Model to ensure clear business drivers that will shape the direction and scope of the Council over the long term.](#)

3.1.2 The Council will ensure that users receive a high quality of service whether provided directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning by:

- Maintaining a Citizen's Panel, and conducting service user satisfaction surveys, publishing the results appropriately.
- Providing a complaints/comments procedure (Fair Comment), and utilising the resulting information to identify areas where service quality is not satisfactory in order to take action to bring about an improvement.
- Maintaining joint Commissioning Arrangements with the National Health Service.
- [Undertaking a Strategic Commissioning Programme which will look at what the Council will commission, how we will do it, who will do it and how we will monitor it.](#)
- Taking action upon weaknesses identified as a result of external reviews, for example External Audit, Ofsted, CSCI etc.
- Giving the citizens of Bristol access to their Council and the services it provides through Customer Service Points and the external website.

- Implementing a Customer Strategy which is looking to improve customer access points into the Council. A 'Customer Portal' for the external website is currently being developed based around key life events for the customer and how to improve engagement with customers.
- Actively engaging staff in customer focus and providing appropriate training and development opportunities.

23.1.3 The Council will ensure it makes the best use of resources and that the council tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money by:

- Maintaining a Value for Money Strategy which ensures that Value for Money is a key part of Business Planning and Service Redesign and promotes Value for Money as part of everyday working.
- Producing an annual Environmental Statement.
- Publishing a 3 year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), ~~setting out spending plans for the next 3 years on).~~
- Developing a rolling basis 3 year budget to enable a more strategic, long-term approach to policy and decision making
- Progressing a Transformation Programme which has already resulted in efficiency savings and will continue to do so thereby increase the Value for Money received by the citizens of Bristol.
- Benchmarking with other Local Authorities, ~~eg the Core Cities, neighbouring authorities and comparative groups.~~
- Reviewing the performance framework and streamlining the performance reporting protocol in order to maximise use of management information and make best use of limited resources.
- Public scrutiny of the budget proposals through 'Bristol's Budget Conversation'.
- Adopting best practice in commissioning and procurement
- Undertaking a Strategic Commissioning Programme which will review all of the Council's activity to ensure the right service is being provided by the right people for the right price.
- Maximising the economic well being of Bristol citizens within global conditions.
- Implementing the Intelligent Council Programme which will improve the way we collect, process and distribute management information.

3.2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

23.2.1 The Council will ensure that there is effective leadership with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for executive, non-executive and scrutiny functions by:

- Election of a Mayor and the establishment of the Executive consisting of the Mayor and his Cabinet Members.
- Establishing an Executive Board which will consist of the Strategic Leadership Team, the Mayor and selected Members to ensure good communication and clear vision.
- Maintaining a Constitution which sets out the roles and responsibilities of both Members and officers, including a Scheme of Delegation which is updated annually.
- Appointing committees to discharge the Council's regulatory and scrutiny responsibilities.
- Providing all Committees with clear terms of reference and work programme to

set out their roles and responsibilities.

- Appointing a [Chief Executive City Director](#) (and Head of Paid Service) and Strategic Leadership Team, and ensuring all staff have clear conditions of employment and job descriptions which set out their roles and responsibilities.
- Appointing a Monitoring Officer (the Head of Legal Services), who carries overall responsibility for legal compliance, working closely with other officers to advise on requirements.
- Providing opportunities for [the Mayor](#), Cabinet and Scrutiny members to come together both formally and informally, to ensure the Council's business is conducted appropriately.

23.2.2 The Council will ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between Council Members and officers and the responsibilities of said Members and officers are carried out to a high standard by:

- Maintaining a Members/Officers protocol within the Constitution which describes and regulates the way in which Members and Officers should interact to work effectively together.
- ~~Ensuring Directorate schemes of~~ [Introducing 'You Can Do It' scheme for delegations are in place and reviewed on a regular basis, thereby providing authorisations which promotes trust and empowerment and provides clear direction and simple information to direct officers of the scope of in carrying out their responsibilities.](#)
- Maintaining a Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) made up of ~~the Chief Executive and~~ Strategic Directors that meets every week to discuss matters which are of strategic and operational importance to the Council.
- ~~Regular meetings between~~ [The introduction of the Cabinet and Executive Board where the Strategic Leadership Team, Mayor and selected Members will meet regularly.](#)
- [Extended Leadership Team meetings and Manager briefs to ensure good communication of key issues and values.](#)
- The Service Director Finance (Section 151 Officer) and the Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer), who are not members of SLT having an open invitation to attend when necessary and receiving all papers.
- Maintaining a performance management system for all staff including senior officers.
- Adopting Codes of Conduct for Members and officers, to which all must adhere.
- ~~Maintaining a Standards Committee with responsibility for overseeing the behaviour of Members.~~
- Maintaining a Scrutiny Function, which provide overview and scrutiny of all Council activities and operates a call in facility.
- Maintaining an Audit Committee with the responsibility for overseeing the governance arrangements within the Council [and has responsibility for overseeing the behaviour of Members.](#)
- Encouraging Members to attend training and development opportunities in order for them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- Officers providing the Executive Member with fortnightly briefings.

23.2.3 The Council will ensure that its relationships with its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other by:

- Adopting a policy for partnership working to ensure that there are clear

governance arrangements and accountabilities when the Council is working with partners

- Being the accountable body and supporting a partnership agreement for all the formal strategic partnerships the Council is involved with, including the Bristol Partnership, detailing the vision, objectives, the partners' roles and a resolution protocol for any disputes.
- Adopting good governance principles for key strategic partnerships
- Providing links to external strategic partnerships via the Bristol website.

23.3 Promoting the Council's values and upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

23.3.1 The Council strives to ensure its Members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in a way that exemplifies a high standard of conduct and effective governance by:

- Ensuring adherence to Codes of Conduct which include a requirement for declarations of interest to be completed by all Members annually, by all new staff, and biennially by staff working in sensitive areas or paid above a certain grade.
- Providing details of the standards of conduct required of Members within the Council's Constitution.
- Monitoring the conduct of Members through ~~a Standard~~[the Audit](#) Committee, which is also responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct by Members.

23.3.2 The Council will ensure its values are put into practice and are effective by:

- Having a clear decision-making protocol contained within the Constitution.
- Providing an Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy and Policy for all Members and staff, with regular reminders of its existence through the Intranet and Fraud Bulletins.
- Having clear and concise Financial and Procurement Regulations in place which are regularly updated.
- Maintaining a Whistleblowing Policy which is readily available to both Members and staff.
- Upholding an Equalities policy.
- Maintaining clear performance management arrangements for officers.

23.4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.

23.4.1 The Council will be rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken by:

- The Full Council setting the policy and the budget framework. Within this framework, all key decisions are made by [the Mayor in consultation with the Cabinet](#).
- The decision-making process being scrutinised by a scrutiny function which also undertakes pre-decision and policy development work.
- Providing access to meetings, including web casts of Council meetings.
- The provision of a Public Forum agenda item at all Committee meetings, giving the public and Members the opportunity to raise issues of public interest.

- A consultation process with the provision for the citizens of Bristol to have their say through e-consultation which is available on the Council website.
- Publishing the [Leader's Mayor's](#) Forward Plan on the Bristol website and elsewhere, giving Bristol citizens access to details of forthcoming key decisions.
- ~~Ensuring the involvement of our community in decision making is part of the Bristol Performs agenda which sets out how we can work together successfully to meet the challenges ahead.~~

2

3.4.2 The Council will ensure good quality information, advice and support is provided to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs by:

- All key decisions made by [the Mayor in consultation with](#) Cabinet being on the basis of written reports, including assessments of the legal and financial implications, policy, equalities and environmental impact assessments, and consideration of the risks involved and how these will be managed.
- The Strategic Leadership ~~team~~[Team](#) reviewing all key decision reports to ensure they are of good quality prior to their submission to ~~Cabinet~~[the Executive](#).
- Scrutiny having the power to call in a decision if they feel it is made without proper consideration of accurate and relevant information.
- Publishing performance information on a regular basis.
- Making use of comparative data and participating in benchmarking ~~with other Core Cities, neighbouring authorities and other comparative groups.~~
- Having a mechanism in place to make effective use of management information to inform where improvement in quality is required.
- Making provision for Members and public questions at full Council meetings.
- Providing numerous avenues for public participation, including: [Neighbourhood Partnerships](#); Citizens Panel; Tenants Groups; ~~and~~ surveys including, ~~Libraries~~[libraries](#), young people and public forums.
- Providing Bristol citizens with advice to maximise economic well being, including links to guidance and support networks through the BCC website.
- [Implementing the Intelligent Council Programme which will improve the way we collect, process and distribute management information.](#)

3.4.3 The Council will ensure all information collected, held, processed and used by the Council is held safely and securely by:

- Adopting an Information Security Policy.
- Nominating a member of the Strategic Leadership Team as Senior Information Risk Owner.
- Ensuring that all Information Security Breaches are recorded and resolved.
- Ensuring all staff are trained and aware of their data security responsibilities.
- [Maintaining an Information Assurance Board and an Information Management and Technology Steering Group to resolve any issues and set priorities for improvement.](#)
- [Introduction of a secure e-mail solution to non-governmental bodies.](#)

3.4.4 The Council will ensure that an effective risk management system is in place by:

- Adopting a Risk Management Strategy which sets out a clear plan for consolidating, progressing and further embedding risk management into the

culture of Council working.

- ➔ Adopting a Risk Management Policy statement which outlines the aims and key principles for managing risk, provides an overview of the framework and describes the mechanisms for its successful implementation.
- ➔ Maintaining a Corporate Risk Register which is reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team and Members on a regular basis to endorse the content and validate the extent to which the risks included are being effectively managed.
- ➔ Requiring each directorate within the Council to maintain a Directorate Risk Register and to nominate a Risk Management "champion" to maintain their directorate register and risk management processes.
- ➔ Supporting a Corporate Risk Management Group which includes the relevant Executive Member and is chaired by the Strategic Director Corporate Services who meet to identify best practice in respect of risk management and provides opportunities for sharing learning across departments.
- ➔ Requiring risk in decision making, projects and service delivery planning to be properly identified, evaluated and managed.
- ➔ The Audit Committee overseeing the effectiveness of risk management arrangements and providing assurance to the Council in this respect in their annual report.
- ➔ Providing risk management training to Members and officers where appropriate.
- ➔ Providing Risk Management guidance on the Council's intranet, including guidance on risk within partnerships.
- ➔ [Undertaking a review of risk management practices at other Local Authorities and private sector organisations](#) in order to [identify improvements to the Council's arrangements](#).

3.4.5 The Council will strive to ensure that Members are utilising their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area by:

- ➔ Clearly documenting the roles and responsibilities of Members and the scope of their activities within the Constitution.
- ➔ Appointing a Monitoring Officer, who's responsibilities include the maintenance of the Constitution and the guidance to Members contained therein.
- ➔ Regularly reviewing Ombudsman and external audit reports to identify areas where improvements should be made.
- ➔ Providing Members and directorates with Legal briefings on changes in legislation and having legal advice available when required.
- ➔ Having an appeals/complaints systems which is available to the citizens of Bristol, details of which can be accessed through the Council website and other methods.

23.5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective.

23.5.1 The Council will ensure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge and experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles by:

- ➔ Developing and delivering a comprehensive Councillor Development Programme to enhance and strengthen members' capacity as confident and effective political and community leaders. This includes the following and is underpinned by the Councillor Development Policy:
 - [providing](#) a dedicated induction programme to newly elected

- members of the council
- [Providing a Refresher Programme of training for Members and a specific additional induction for members of Core Skills Programme](#)
 - [The Councillor Development Steering Group \(represented by all political groups\) reviews the Cabinet effectiveness of training and areas to be included in the Core Skills Programme](#)
 - Issuing all members with the councillor handbook, A Guide to Being a Bristol City Councillor.
- ~~Providing an opportunity for both leading and aspiring members to access national leadership Leadership development programmes (such as the LGID Leadership Academy) offered to members via Political Group Leaders Core Skills Framework Programme) and other bespoke initiatives including political mentoring.~~
 - ~~Participating in a sub-regional programme jointly with neighbouring authorities and offering core skills development such as chairing, public speaking, etc. The Joint Unitary Authority Councillor Development Group reviews effectiveness of training with neighbouring authorities.~~
 - Providing briefings to members on relevant topics.
- ~~Supporting attendance at conferences and events external to the City Council that are relevant to role.~~
- ~~Supporting member attendance at qualification courses.~~
- Providing a [Corporate Development Programme corporate development programme](#) for officers [including secondment opportunities across the Council.](#)
- Operating a Performance Management & Development Scheme (PMDS) for all Council employees which incorporates an annual Personal Development Plan (PDP).
- Providing new staff with an induction into the Council processes, offering cross cutting training and development to all staff.
- Ensuring all employees have a job description which clearly details their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring that Statutory Officers such as the Monitoring Officer and the s151 Officer have clear job descriptions and personal specification of their responsibilities.
- Requiring senior officers to consider resource implication when collating their plans.
- [Commencing the People Programme which looks to ensure that the Council has the right people with the right skills set are in the right jobs at the right time. The Programme is also addressing improvements in internal communication and engagement.](#)
- [Introduction of the Bristol Leadership Pipeline, an accessible at-a-glance practical guide to what good leadership looks like and how to develop the necessary skills which is linked to the PMDS process.](#)

3.5.2 The Council will evaluate the performance of the people with governance responsibilities as individuals and as a group by:

- Maintaining a Councillor Development Programme.
- Offering the facility for Members to participate in individual 1:1 meetings [with their group leaders](#) to review their areas of interest and identify areas they would like to develop.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the [Standards and Audit Committees, Committee](#) and reporting annually on the impact of their work.

- Operating performance arrangements for the ~~Chief Executive and the~~ Strategic Leadership Team.
- Mentoring, monitoring and management arrangements for officers to ensure they are performing effectively
- Making provision for internal secondment opportunities to enable officers to acquire skills outside their normal remit.
- Giving recognition to Council staff who have exceeded their remit through an annual Celebration of Success.

23.5.3 The Council attempts to encourage new talent for membership of the Authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal by:

- Supporting ~~Political~~appropriate groups, ~~who~~that have a primary role in encouraging new talent and representatives of all sections of the community to stand election as Members of the Council.
- Supporting Equalities Forums, Citizens Panels, and Stakeholder Engagement .
- Ensuring open recruitment of school governors, encouraging participation of members of the community with varying skills. Supporting recruitment with appropriate training.

~~Supporting Members to participate in the Young Persons shadowing scheme – a national scheme adopted locally in Bristol and aiming to involve young people in democracy.~~

- 2Encouraging engagement in the 'Bristol Big Youth Vote' to elect young people onto the Bristol Youth Select Committee and the UK Youth Parliament. The democratically elected youth representatives receive the mandate from Bristol's children and young people to act as their representatives and advocates in arenas that matter.
- Providing training opportunities through the Bristol Apprentices scheme
- Working in partnership with the University of the West of England (UWE) to offer subsidised student internships.

3.6 **Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability**

23.6.1 The Council will exercise leadership which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive, accountable relationships by:

- Supporting Neighbourhood Partnerships to provide a focus for community engagement
- Supporting the Bristol 20:20 plan ~~through the Bristol Performs agenda.~~
- Providing the citizens of Bristol with information about the Council and its spending through the distribution of a leaflet with their Council Tax bill and the publication of a summary of the year end accounts in the Council newsletter publication on the Bristol City Council website.
- Publishing the Medium Term Financial Plan on the Bristol City Council website.
- Supporting a Citizens' Panels tackling local issues.
- Requiring our Strategic Partners to report to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSM) on a regular basis.
- Supporting a Planning user Group, who meet quarterly to review needs of

customers and improve service.

- Participating in a Bristol Property Agents Association and Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network as part of the Council's engagement with stakeholder.
- ~~Participating in the West of England Joint Scrutiny in order to strengthen accountability.~~

2

3.6.2 The Council will take an active 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 by:

- Taking a leading role in the ~~Bristol Partnership~~Children and Young People's Trust Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Safer Bristol Board.
- ~~Subjecting itself to peer review on areas of strategic importance and instigate action to implement any resulting recommendations accepted.~~
- Maintaining and following the Council's Code of Good Practice on Consultation.
- Provide the citizens of Bristol with the opportunity to have their say through e-consultation, Ask Bristol and E-petitions and by participating in Citizen's Panels, or by completing a satisfaction survey.
- Providing web casts of Full Council meetings on the Bristol City Council website in order to keep Bristol's citizens up-to-date.
- Maintaining an Equalities Forum.
- Supporting a Corporate Consultation Team and providing a Consultation Finder on the Bristol City Council website.
- All Cabinet reports containing a "Consultation" section.
- All Members being expected to offer, as best practice, surgeries, or equivalent means of providing assistance, for their constituents and key partners (eg. Police) could be involved where appropriate.
- Supporting Neighbourhood Partnerships covering all wards to facilitate engagement with local stakeholders and to identify local priorities.
- Publishing a free electronic Council newsletter on the Bristol City Council website which communicates the Council's vision and priorities.
- Publishing a Council Tax booklet which is distributed annually.
- The Council's planning and decision making process being designed to include consultation with stakeholders and the submission of views by local people including publishing applications on the website.
- Maintaining a comprehensive complaints/appeals procedure.
- Maintaining a Freedom of Information policy and acting upon requests in a timely manner.
- Maintaining a relationship and providing support to the Bristol Members Youth Parliament.
- Participating in outreach work with ethnic groups.
- Publishing the Council's performance annually.
- Striving to ensure good information exchange within the Council and with external partners, with the provision of an internal intranet site and an external website, which is accessible to our partners and the citizens of Bristol.

~~2~~3.6.3 The Council will make the best of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meeting responsibilities of staff by:

- Maintaining comprehensive consultation arrangements with the Trade Unions.
- Having an agreed consultation procedure for managing change.

- ➔ Maintaining an effective Performance Management Development Scheme: [that requires all staff to participate in an annual development review](#)
- ➔ Implementing a People Programme to ensure that the right people with the right skills set are in the right jobs at the right time.
- ➔ Implementing a People Strategy with performance reported annually and highlighting under represented groups.
- ➔ Maintaining comprehensive and effective HR policies including an Equalities policy.
- ~~➔ [Requiring all staff to participate in an annual development review through the Council's Performance Management & Development Scheme \(PMDS\)](#)~~
- ➔ Accessing staff opinions through [biennial](#) staff surveys [including Health at Work Surveys](#).
- ~~➔ [Improving the working environment through the Bristol Performs agenda](#)~~
- ➔ Working in partnership with local colleges, to maximise the number of opportunities for apprenticeships within the Council.
- ➔ [Creating the tools, culture and working environments to enhance the way that officers serve the people of Bristol through the Bristol Workplace Programme. Initiating the Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\). This service available to all employees provides help through a variety of ways to deal with personal problems that might have an impact on their work performance, health, and general well-being.](#)

4. Monitoring and Review

34.1 Good corporate governance requires the active participation of both Members and employees across the Council.

34.2 In order to ensure that this Code is effectively maintained and embedded within the Council, the following monitoring review procedures will apply.

34.3 Internal Audit will have the responsibility for:

- ➔ Ensuring the Code is maintained as a living document.
- ➔ Undertaking an annual review of internal control and governance, utilising assurance statements from Strategic Directors, the statutory officers and other appropriate senior staff
- ➔ Utilising the annual review to prepare a draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and implementing any changes to the Code identified by the AGS process.

34.4 The Audit Committee will have responsibility for providing assurance to Council in respect of:-

- ➔ the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, risk management framework and internal control environment, including overseeing:
 - risk management strategies
 - anti-fraud arrangements
 - whistleblowing strategies
 - Internal and External Audit Activities
- ➔ the effectiveness of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent it affects exposure to risk and poor internal control

- the approval of the Annual Governance Statement
- the review and approval of the annual statement of accounts, confirming the appropriate accounting policies have been followed, including the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts