

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE
June 2012**

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- Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.
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- Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.
- Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.

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- Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.
- Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.
- Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of resources in balancing continuity and renewal.

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- Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.
- 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 or in partnership.
- Making best use of resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.

1. Introduction

South Kesteven District Council is committed to meeting best practice standards for good governance. This Local Code of Corporate Governance provides a public statement that sets out the way in which the Council will meet and demonstrate that commitment. The Code was last updated in May 2010 and in line with the annual work plan of the Governance and Audit Committee it has been reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance has been developed in accordance with the 2007 CIPFA/SOLACE framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government” but the content is very much the Council’s own. Whilst the adoption of a Local Code is not a statutory requirement, it represents best practice and is a key element of the Council’s overarching governance arrangements.

The Code also takes account of the Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: a Framework published in March 2010. This note has been developed to advise on the application of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in Local Government under the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. It illustrates how the governance requirements to support the principles in the CFO Statement need to be reflected in the Local Code.

2. Core Principles of Good Governance

The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework sets out the following six core principles on which good governance is based and forms the basis of the Council’s Local Code of Corporate Governance:

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

Various supporting principles are described in the framework that also underpin these core elements.

3. What is “Governance”?

Governance has been defined by South Kesteven as “a well run Council who provides high quality services by ensuring that the Council listens and engages with its community. This will mean it can demonstrate the best value for money in achieving the right outcomes for our customers giving special consideration to those who may be vulnerable or hard to reach”.

Good governance leads to good management, good performance and good stewardship of public money. It therefore enables the Council to effectively implement its vision in accordance with its values and to engage effectively with its citizens and service users to ensure good outcomes for them. The Council is here to provide services its residents need and want and to plan for the future. It's the Council's role to help protect and enhance the special qualities of South Kesteven that make it one of the best places to live, work and do business

4. How important is it?

South Kesteven recognises that all good governance relies on high standards of probity. When conduct and behaviour are corrupt or improper it erodes confidence in the way the Council does business. South Kesteven has a strong reputation for high standards of governance and probity, however the local community's expectations are always increasing and it is important for the future wellbeing of the District and local democracy that these standards are not only maintained, but improved in the future.

For individuals who contribute to the Council either as members or as staff, strong corporate governance is also a means of safeguarding and protecting their own reputation.

5. How does it work in practice?

South Kesteven District Council, like every other local authority, operates through a governance framework which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. Over the last few years, the Council has put considerable effort into codifying its principles and processes. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this is the Council's constitution, which is regularly reviewed and updated. No less effort has gone into the development of protocols for the Council's internal policies and procedures, which are also reviewed regularly; such as the Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Framework and financial regulations.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance brings all these practices together into one document and makes them open and explicit. It identifies areas where further action is required to meet changing circumstances and/or to ensure that the Council follows best practice in all aspects of governance. The Code will be reviewed annually and will support the Annual Governance Statement.

6. How the council applies the six core principles of good corporate governance

Whilst adoption of a Local Code of Corporate Governance is not a statutory requirement, it represents best practice and is a key element of the Council's overarching governance arrangements.

The Council cannot achieve its aim of providing high quality services to our residents, without the bedrock of sound governance and the commitment of members and officers to maintaining high standards of probity. We hope that, by making explicit the underlying principles and processes, the Code will assist members and officers to sustain high standards both now and in the future.

The following section shows in detail how the Council applies the six principles of good corporate governance.

HOW SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL APPLIES THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

PRINCIPLE 1: FOCUSING ON THE PURPOSE OF THE AUTHORITY AND ON OUTCOMES FOR THE COMMUNITY AND CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A VISION FOR THE LOCAL AREA

Supporting Principles:

- *Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose, vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.*
- *Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning.*
- *Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.*

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
1.1	We have determined and published our vision and long term priorities for South Kesteven.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan 2011-2015 • Annual Report • Four Priority themes : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Grow the Economy -Clean, Green and Healthy -Promote Leisure, Arts and Culture -Support Good Housing for all
1.2	We have developed a long term strategy for the local area with our partners. It is based on consultation with local people about the sort of place they want the area to be. The strategy co-ordinates the actions of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Framework (Local Code of Corporate Governance) • Partnership policy • Development of Customer Access Strategy • Establishment of a Community drop-in

		session (bi-annually)
1.4	Our corporate planning framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of our community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan 2011-2015 • Service Plans • Project Delivery documentation and plans
1.5	We publish a summary of our annual financial statements on the Council's website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of Accounts • Annual Report
1.6	We aim to ensure that the purchase or commissioning of goods, services and works required to deliver services represent value for money and are in accordance with our Strategic Priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincolnshire Procurement Strategy and Improvement Plan • Contract Procedure Rules for procuring goods, services and works • Procurement Lincolnshire Annual Work plans • Supporting local business through providing access to contract opportunities • Working with Procurement Lincolnshire to begin development of local Purchase Action Plan
1.7	We have established a range of performance indicators used to measure progress against our key priorities which are reported to Cabinet , Scrunity Committee and monitored by Management through its Performance and Project Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly performance monitoring reports to cabinet and Scrutiny • Monthly Reporting to the Project and Performance Board
1.8	We have established arrangements to ensure that services provided, whether directly or by contractors, partners or the voluntary sector, are delivered to a high standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract management procedures
1.9	We have effective procedures to respond to customer feedback. .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer feedback process • Customer access strategy • Corporate complaints procedure
1.10	We have developed arrangements to ensure that critical service delivery can be mainined or recovered during an emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity Plans • Emergency planning arrangements • Business Continuity Annual Report
1.11	Underpinning our 4 priority themes is the ethos of a well run Council which includes effective financial management to achieve efficiencies and savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Plan • Annual Revenue Budget • Annual Report • Transformation and Savings Programme
1.12	There is a strategy that formalises what we can do to ensure that we make the most of the resources available to continue to improve services and provide positive benefits for the people of South Kesteven.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency Strategy • Service Plans reflect efficiency improvements
1.13	We have established arrangements to ensure that financial resources are directed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Plan

	our priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Strategy & Capital Programme • Treasury Management Strategy • Revenue budget process • Quarterly budget monitoring and forecasting • Project and Performance Project Board
1.14	We have an internal audit function that provides a continuous audit of the Council's activities. It examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 year Internal Audit Strategy • Annual Internal Audit Plan • Internal Audit assignment reports • Internal Audit progress and follow up reports • Internal Audit advisory reports • Recommendation tracking system in place monitor compliance with Internal Audit actions
1.15	Our external auditors provide an annual assessment on how well we are managing the resources the Council has available and delivering value for money to achieve better and sustainable outcomes for local people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Commission Annual Governance Report • Audit Commission Annual audit letter • Audit Commission Annual report on certification of claims and returns
1.16	We have developed robust procedures to respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans developed in response to external inspections
1.17	We have established arrangements to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Framework – rolled out via the Council policy management software • Whistle-blowing Policy (Confidential Reporting Code) –Intranet • A Benefits Investigation Unit whose primary task is to detect Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit fraud and take appropriate legal action against people who commit this type of fraud. • An internal audit function which is alert to the risk of fraud and corruption when reviewing the Council's systems and processes. • Fraud Response Plan • Anti-Money Laundering Policy • Engagement with the Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative • Supporting the Audit Commission Annual Fraud and Corruption survey

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PRINCIPLE 2: MEMBERS AND OFFICERS WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE A COMMON PURPOSE WITH CLEARLY DEFINED FUNCTIONS AND ROLES

Supporting Principles:

- ***Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about the executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.***
- ***Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between elected members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard.***
- ***Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other.***

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
2.1	<p>We have produced a documented framework that sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This framework sets out the roles and responsibilities and accountability of: The Cabinet, the Leader and other Members as well as senior officers and of the leadership team and its members individually; • Policy & Performance Panels, which advise Cabinet and Council on its policies, budgets and service delivery; • The committees established to fulfil the Council's regulatory and other functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Constitution • Constitution committee who monitor and review application of the constitution and work with the Monitoring Officer / CEX and PDG's over any proposed changes. This would cover areas such as scheme of delegation and annual work plans for the committee itself. • Performance and Programme Panels Terms of Reference
2.2	<p>We have documented protocols governing relationships between members and officers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member / Officer Protocol
2.3	<p>We have clearly defined the relative roles and responsibilities of Members and senior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution –Scheme of Delegation

	officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated website section 'your Council and Democracy' has specific information on Member role profiles • Officers job descriptions • Corporate Training and development programme which includes members and corporate induction
2.4	Functions are delegated by Council and the Cabinet to committees and officers. Certain functions are reserved for decision by Full Council as detailed in Local Authority functions (England) Regs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution
2.5	The Chief Executive is responsible for and accountable to the Council for all aspects of operational management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution
2.6	The Strategic Director Corporate Focus as the s151 Officer appointed under the 1972 Local Government Act, carries overall responsibility for the financial administration of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Director Corporate Focus is a professionally qualified accountant and has direct access to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and other Cabinet Members as well as direct access to the Governance & Audit Committee and external audit • Strategic Director Corporate Focus has a line of professional accountability for all finance staff in the Council. • The Council has established robust arrangements to manage its finances, including a Medium Term Financial Plan, quarterly and annual budget processes and compliance with CIPFA's Codes and Guidance on a Prudential Framework for Capital Finance, Treasury Management and the management of reserves etc. • The Council maintains an effective internal audit service and effective risk management system.
2.7	The Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) carries overall responsibility for legal and regulatory compliance. The Monitoring Officer is required to report to Members should any proposal, decision or omission give rise to unlawfulness/maladministration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution
2.8	We have developed a protocol to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member/Officer protocol
2.9	We have clearly set out terms and conditions for the remuneration of members and officers and there is an effective structure for managing the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Remuneration Panel • Members Allowance Scheme

2.10	We have established a range of mechanisms to communicate our service objectives and to monitor performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay and Grading + Job Evaluation Scheme • Annual Report • Corporate Plan • Operational Service Plans • Performance and Project Programme Board • National and local performance indicators • Corporate Performance Management Framework • Customer satisfaction surveys • Corporate feedback process • Line management responsibilities
2.11	We have developed our vision, strategic plans, priorities and measures through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders. We ensure that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan 2011-2015 • Four Priority themes • Communities and stakeholders are consulted through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents' survey • Community focus forum • Stakeholder consultation • Neighbourhood Groups • Tenants conferences • Community Engagement (e.g. C.Tax payers, Business Community) • Communities and stakeholders are kept in touch through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council magazine - SK Today • Community drop in sessions for the public • The Council's website • The Council's partners' websites • Stakeholder groups
2.12	We will ensure that when Members are working in partnerships that they are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership protocol awareness training is available for Members
2.13	All joint or partnering arrangements with other bodies are subject to consultation with the Strategic Director and Monitoring Officer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules • Partnership Policy • Partnership Agreements • Annual Report on Partnerships is presented to Governance and Audit Committee
2.14	Our significant partnerships have been identified with protocols to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of significant partnerships with separate risk registers held at partnership level

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- The work of Internal Audit
 - Partnership toolkit (Lincs.CC)
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PRINCIPLE 3: PROMOTING VALUES FOR THE AUTHORITY AND DEMONSTRATING THE VALUES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH UPHOLDING HIGH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

Supporting Principles:

- *Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.*
- *Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.*

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
3.1	We have defined and communicated the standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and employees through codes of conduct and protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members' Code of Conduct • Staff code of Conduct • Member/Officer Protocol • Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Framework • Financial Regulations • Anti-Money Laundering Policy • Procurement and Contract Procedure Notes • Member Training Programme • Induction procedures • Members' Information Bulletin • Use of Policy Management system to ensure all staff have access to and read policies
3.2	We have put into place arrangements to ensure that Members and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. We have also established appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers of Interests • Standing Orders • Registers of Gifts & Hospitality • Whistle-blowing Policy (Confidential Reporting Code) • Systems to report and deal with any incidents of fraud and corruption

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance procedures • Internal Audit
3.3	<p>We have developed and maintain shared values and behaviours, including leadership values, for both the organisation and employees that reflect public expectations. We communicate these values to Members, employees, the community and our partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Unlocking our potential initiative • Induction procedures • Human Resources policies • Publication of an Annual Governance Statement
3.4	<p>We have put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and we monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has established robust arrangements to manage its financial affairs in conformity with appropriate ethical standards. • The Council maintains an effective internal audit service and effective risk management system. • Monitoring Officer role • Governance & Audit Committee • Corporate customer feedback process • Staff Performance Development Review procedures, Performance Management Strategy

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PRINCIPLE 4: TAKING INFORMED AND TRANSPARENT DECISIONS WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY AND MANAGING RISK

Supporting Principles:

- *Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.*
- *Having and good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.*
- *Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.*
- *Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.*

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
4.1	We operate an open and effective process for decision-making. We publish key decisions in the Council's Forward Plan. Our Council meetings are open to the public with the exception of where confidential or personal matters may be disclosed. We publish minutes of all Council meetings on our website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution • Forward Plan • Minutes of Council meetings published on our website
4.2	We have an established Scrutiny Committee to provide an effective scrutiny function that encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Council's performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Terms of Reference • Minutes of Scrutiny Committee meetings • Policy Development Groups • An effective internal audit service is resourced and maintained
4.3	We have put into place arrangements to safeguard Members and employees against conflicts of interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers of Interests • Registers of Gifts & Hospitality • Declarations of personal or prejudicial interests at the start of each meeting in which discussions

		involve a matter in which a Member has an interest.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monitoring Officer may be approached to advise on conflicts of interest. • Annual declaration of related party transactions as part of Statement Accounts
4.4	We have established a Governance and Audit Committee (GAC). The Committee is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions. Its terms of reference are consistent with CIPFA guidance on Audit Committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Constitution • GAC Terms of Reference • Minutes of GAC meetings • The Strategic Director Corporate Focus has direct access to the Governance & Audit Committee and External Audit • Private meetings held with both Internal and External Audit with Governance and Audit Committee • Annual Report to Council on work activity of the committee
4.5	We have established effective, transparent and accessible arrangements to deal with complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Customer Feedback process
4.6	We have established, and are continuing to develop, sound systems for providing management information for performance measurement and decision-making purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and Programme Board monitor and review performance alongside project delivery • Performance Management Framework • Data Quality Strategy • Performance Management System
4.7	We provide decision-makers with information that is fit for purpose. This includes ensuring that decision-makers are provided with clear explanations of legal, financial and technical issues and their implications. We provide training to Members to ensure that we have a strong basis for quality decision-making especially for quasi-judicial committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cabinet report template requires information to be provided explaining the legal and financial implications of decisions, as well as implications for each of the corporate priorities. • The Council has established robust arrangements to manage its finances, including a medium Term Financial Plan, monthly and annual budget processes and compliance with CIPFA's Codes and Guidance on a Prudential Framework for Capital Finance, Treasury Management and the management of reserves etc. • Advice on financial, legal and technical issues is provided by the s151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and other officers as required and in line with good practice guidance –LAAP (Local

Authority Reserves and Balances).

- Budget monitoring reports are issued to budget managers monthly and they also have on-line access to budget data, Heads of Service receive group budget reports monthly to discuss with their Strategic Directors, Management Team receive monthly financial information and quarterly forecast reports which also go to the Resources Policy Development Group. Governance and Audit Committee receive annual outturn report.
- Financial Services routinely provide advice to budget holders with dedicated accountancy support for each service area.
- Reports are sent to decision-makers with the agenda of meetings on a timely basis.
- Committee Report template includes impacts such as “Resource Implications”, “Risk and Mitigation (Including Health & Safety & Data Quality)”, “Crime & Disorder”, “Equality” and Comments of Section 151 and Monitoring Officer.
- The Council publishes a Forward Plan listing key decisions to be taken. Policy is evidence based.

4.8 We have put in place risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function, which are continually being developed. Members and officers at all levels recognise that risk management is part of their jobs.

- Risk Management Strategy and Protocol
 - Corporate and Service Risk Registers
 - Risk Management system is used to monitor / track risk
 - Partnership risk register
 - Project Risk Registers
 - Significant partnerships each hold an individual risk register
 - Member and officer training on risk management
 - The Cabinet report template contains a section to consider the ‘risk implications’ of any decisions
 - The Governance and Audit Committee reviews the Internal Audit work programme and oversees the implementation of audit recommendations.
 - The Governance and Audit Committee receives regular briefings on corporate risks.
 - The Risk Management Group meets bi-monthly
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to discuss mainly Service based risk issues. Internal audit monitor the effectiveness of risk management. Health and safety policies and procedures The Council has established robust arrangements to manage its finances and systems of internal control.
4.9	We have established effective arrangements for 'whistle-blowing'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing policy/procedure (on Intranet) and via policy management software Fraud telephone hotline Benefit fraud referral form for staff and public
4.10	We actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on the Council but also strive to utilise our legal powers to the full benefit of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the functions of the Monitoring Officer is to ensure the lawfulness and fairness of decision making.
4.11	We recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cabinet report template contains a section to consider the 'legal implications' of any decisions. Legal Services produces as required advice to update officers on relevant changes in legislation.
4.12	We observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon the Council, as well as the requirements of general law and, in particular, integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into our procedures and decision-making processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of the Council's legal advisors in all major issues. Member and officer training

PRINCIPLE 5: DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO BE EFFECTIVE

Supporting Principles:

- *Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.*
- *Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.*
- *Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of resources in balancing continuity and renewal.*

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
5.1	We provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Members and Officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member and employee induction programmes • Member training as required • Staff and member training and development programme • Leadership and development programme for managers
5.2	We ensure that the Council's statutory and other officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are understood throughout the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Director Corporate Focus is a professionally qualified accountant and has direct access to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and other Cabinet Members as well as direct access to the Governance & Audit Committee and external audit • Strategic Director Corporate Focus has a line of professional accountability for all finance staff in the Council. • The Council has established robust arrangements to manage its finances and sound systems of

	<p>internal control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Monitoring Officer • Adherence to professional standards • Service Plans reflect human resource requirements • Staff Performance Development Review procedure • Corporate learning and development Programme linked to PDR's and development areas. • One to ones and team meetings • Development of a Road Map for the Council to unlock staff potential • Job descriptions and person specifications have been produced for all posts • Recruitment and appointment policies and procedures • Reports from inspectorates and regulators • Systems exist to cascade information to Members and employees • Publication of the Constitution in the intranet and Council website
<p>5.3 We assess the skills required by Members and employees and are committed to developing those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member induction programme • Corporate (employee) induction programme • Training provided to members prior to issue of financial statements. • Ad-hoc financial training including governance, risk and treasury management. • Training on budget monitoring provided • Dedicated democratic support to provide guidance to members. • Behavioural framework in place for managers • Reflections process to assess managers against performance framework
<p>5.4 We 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities for members individually and collectively, including a programme of seminars on topical matters • Key Members identified and provided training to develop scrutiny skills (e.g. Scrutiny and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance and Audit Committee) The Council has identified for members and relevant committees core training areas which they must attend Additional support to members such as the Policy Development groups through dedicated resource
5.5	We ensure that arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint training with other Districts for both Members & Officers Members Scrutiny & Policy Development Handbook Development Reviews
5.6	We have established arrangements to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to, and participate in the work of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals are encouraged to participate in the work of the Council through consultation on plans and strategies. The Council's magazine and website informs the community of forthcoming meetings, events and items in which the community are able to participate. Community Focus Group Established Community engagement events established Dedicated consultation on key issues Roadshows to attract prospective members
5.7	We will ensure that career structures are in place for Members and employees to encourage participation and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Member training and development programme under consideration Employee Annual Performance and Development and Review process Workforce development plan integrated into people and workforce strategy Implementation of a road map for the council to unlock staff potential Staff encouraged to be involved in corporate work outside their service area.

PRINCIPLE 6: ENGAGING WITH LOCAL PEOPLE AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE ROBUST PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Supporting Principles:

- *Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.*
- *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 or in partnership.*
- *Making best use of resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.*

Ref	How we apply the principles	How this is evidenced
6.1	We are accountable to local people and stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected Members are democratically accountable to their local area and this provides a clear leadership role in building sustainable communities. • The Corporate Plan is published on the Council's website. • The 'call in' procedure allows members to examine in detail decisions made by the Cabinet. Decisions may be 'called in', which means that implementation does not take place immediately to allow an opportunity for further consideration. • An annual report on the activity of the Scrutiny function is taken to and considered by full Council • Our financial statements are audited and published on the Council website. • Our External Auditor provides an annual assessment of the Council's performance.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We receive reports from inspectorates and regulators throughout the year. • We are subject to, and report on performance against, a range of national and local indicators.
6.2	We ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Strategy • Council website • Council minutes and agendas • Staff -weekly news letter (e-mail) .Public magazine (SKtoday), Council tenants magazine (Skyline) Consultation toolkit available for formal consultation arrangements. • Informal consultation arrangements include contact via our website and magazine based customer surveys. • Community and voluntary sector representatives have decision-making roles on the South Kesteven Local Strategic Partnership at both strategic and operational level. • Neighbourhood Groups. • Tenants conferences
6.3	We hold Council meetings in public, unless there are good reasons for confidentiality, and we allow the public the opportunity to speak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public are allowed to attend all committee meetings including Council, Cabinet etc and are able to raise questions to members • Council meeting minutes and agendas available via council website
6.4	We have arrangements in place to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Forums • Strategies, policies and other publications are available in alternative formats upon request.
6.5	We have established a clear policy on the types of issues that the public and service users will be consulted on. This includes providing a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation & Engagement Strategy • The Consultation Calendar forms a central register for recording all engagement activities across the Council. • Information regarding community engagement is clearly articulated on a dedicated section of the South Kesteven website.
6.6	We publish performance information that gives information on the Council's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements. We also publish information about outcomes,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We publish an annual summary of performance information and our financial statements. Key

	<p>achievements and service user satisfaction.</p>	<p>messages on performance issues are included in the magazine which is delivered to every household –e.g. recycling performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance information and performance reports are published on the Council's website. • Corporate Plan 2011-2015 • Customer Access Strategy • Council Tax leaflet
6.7	<p>The Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and employees. We have a commitment to openness and transparency in all our 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"> • Council agendas and minutes are published on the Council's website • Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
6.8	<p>We have developed and maintain a clear policy on how employees and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Unions consultation through Joint Consultative and Negotiating Group • Staff surveys • Staff Development Reviews • Open door to discuss issues with the Chief Executive and strategic directors • Staff suggestion scheme • Weekly e-mail newsletter to staff (Insight) • Establishment of a staff forum