

Agenda Item	12
Report No	AS/14/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Audit & Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **28 September 2022**

Report Title: **Code of Corporate Governance**

Report By: **Head of Corporate Governance**

1. **Purpose/Executive Summary**

1.1 This report provides an update on progress with delivering the Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2021/22 and presents the proposed Code for 2022/23 for Members' approval.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the progress on delivering the 2021/22 Code of Corporate Governance
- ii. Approve the 2022/23 Code of Corporate Governance

3. **Implications**

3.1 There are no financial, legal, Gaelic, Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) or Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications arising directly from this report and actions requiring to be delivered under the Code of Corporate Governance will continue to be built into Service and Operational plans where required.

4 **Introduction**

4.1 The Council is required to prepare a Code of Corporate Governance on an annual basis and this requirement is based on advice from Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) on best practice on this matter.

4.2 The Council has also agreed that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee would receive an annual report on the local Code to ensure proper scrutiny.

- 4.3 CIPFA and SOLACE published a revised Guidance Note for Scottish Authorities- Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016). This provides guidance on implementing the Framework and provides an important foundation to enable local authorities to review effectiveness and to identify continuing improvements in governance arrangements.
- 4.4 The Framework and Guidance are based on seven core principles each with a number of sub-principles. The core principles are:-
- 3.4.1 Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - 3.4.2 Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
 - 3.4.3 Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
 - 3.4.4 Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
 - 3.4.5 Developing the authority's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
 - 3.4.6 Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
 - 3.4.7 Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 4.5 This report confirms the actions delivered under the Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2021/22 and presents the proposed Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2022/23 for approval.
5. **Local Code of Corporate Governance**
- 5.1 Code of Corporate Governance 2021/22
- The Code of Corporate Governance 2021/22 was agreed by this Committee in June 2021 and a copy can be found at:-
https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/78325/item_9_-_code_of_corporate_governance
- 5.2 The progress in delivering the actions set out in the Code is monitored quarterly through the Council's Performance Management System. In line with performance in previous years the Council has made substantial progress in delivering the commitments set out within the 2021/22 Code. The majority of actions are either complete or are on target with a very small number showing slippage in completion which include:-
- i) Refreshed Member Development Programme. With the Council elections taking place in May 2022 the focus was on preparing and delivering an induction programme for new Members. The programme has offered sessions on the issues such as the Code

of Conduct and information management along with regulatory matters such as planning and licensing. The programme is ongoing and a report is to be taken to October Council following the issuing of a Members' survey which will inform the future direction of the programme.

- ii) Corporate Workforce Strategy and Plan in place. A revised Corporate Workforce Planning Strategy is currently being developed and will be reported to Committee. Service Workforce Plans are also being developed in line with the emerging strategy.

6. **Code of Corporate Governance 2022/23**

The proposed Code is detailed at Appendix One.

Date: 12 September 2022

Author: Stewart Fraser, Head of Corporate Governance

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
A) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.	Behaving with integrity	All Councillors have agreed to abide by the Councillors Code of Conduct, Protocol for relations between Councillors and Employees and the Nolan Principles	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	√	
		Member Induction and ongoing training programme with emphasis on the principle of Councillors behaving with integrity at all time	Executive Chief Officer- Performance and Governance	Ongoing	A Members survey was issued early in 2022, part of which focused on members' training and induction and the feedback from this helped to inform the development of the Members' induction programme which commenced the week following the local Government elections in May 2022 and remains ongoing
		Programme of Member Training and Development being developed which will continue to reinforce conduct and integrity as core principles. Programme will consider further training on regulatory issues such as planning,	Executive Chief Officer- Performance and Governance	Ongoing	The Members' induction programme remains ongoing. Sessions have been delivered on key aspects including planning, information management, Code of Conduct and licensing. The Members' Intranet has also been

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		information management and the Code of Conduct			completely refreshed and updated and enables Members to access their key documents and guidance from one place, including the Improvement Service Induction Notebooks. Training and development opportunities will continue to be rolled out over the coming months with dedicated sessions on subjects including health and safety; Member safety and security; Equality and Diversity; and Gaelic Awareness. A range of online training and development opportunities are also available on the Council's online learning platform Traineasy including corporate risk, Members' scrutiny role and performance management.
		Report to Council on an annual basis on the uptake of Member training and development		October 2022	A further Member survey will be issued in the Autumn which will include additional questions seeking feedback on the

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					induction programme and the delivery of ongoing training and development opportunities as a rolling programme which will inform a report to Council in October 2022
		All Officers are required to comply with the Code of Conduct for Officers and Protocol for relations between Councillors and Employees and compliance forms part of the Induction for new employees	Interim Head of People	Ongoing	
	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Councillors Code of Conduct in place and compliance monitored via annual report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Ongoing	
		Council Standing Orders sets out the Council's Governance arrangements and how decisions are made, and this is reviewed annually.	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Ongoing	Standing Orders were reviewed and amended in June 2022.
		Employee Code of Conduct in place and compliance managed through HR policies and procedures including Grievance, Capability and Disciplinary policies	Interim Head of People	√	HR policies and procedures are reviewed on regular basis to ensure legislative and organisational compliance.

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		Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders reinforce the ethical values of the Council including in the awarding of contracts to third party organisations	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance/ Head of Corporate Finance		Financial Regulations are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. CIPFA review of the Council's Financial Regulations supported a full review and updated Financial Regulations were submitted by the Strategic Lead Corporate Audit & Performance to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2021 and were recommended to Council for approval, being homologated through the minutes of the committee at Council on 28 October 2021. The updated Regulations were subsequently published on and are maintained on a universal access Sharepoint site for all staff and also published on the Council's website for public access.
	Respecting the rule of the law	Council's Scheme of Delegation sets out the authority delegated to committees and officers and supports compliance with statutory and legislative	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Ongoing	The Council's Scheme of Delegation was reviewed and amended in March 2022. Any further amendments and revisals will be reported to Council in October 2022.

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		obligations and is reviewed annually			
		Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders are reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with statutory and legislative obligations	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance/ Head of Corporate Finance	√	Financial Regulations are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Following advice from CIPFA a full review was completed in September 2021 and recommended for approval to Council by Audit and Scrutiny Committee in September 2021 with approval in October 2021.
		Statutory Officers are appointed and their responsibilities set out in the Scheme of Delegation. Where appropriate statutory officers are part of the Council's Executive Leadership Team	Chief Executive	√	
		A Whistle-Blowing Policy is in place and reviewed regularly	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	Ongoing	The revised policy was approved by Council in October 2020 and has been implemented. Annual reports on policy will be considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (June 2021 and annually thereafter) .Any significant findings from a whistleblowing

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					investigation will be the subject of a 'lessons learned' report to Committee.
		HR policies and procedures are in place to deal with Grievance, Capability and Disciplinary matters relating to employees	Interim Head of People	Ongoing	HR policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure legislative and organisational compliance
		The Council's Internal Audit Team undertake investigations into complaints alleging any misconduct or lack of compliance with corporate procedures	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	Ongoing	
B) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Openness	Standing Orders for conducting Council business promote openness and transparency with all decisions made in public (unless exemptions under the Act apply) and all agendas and papers published in advance on the Council Website	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Ongoing	Standing Orders were reviewed and amended in June 2022
		All meetings of the Council, Strategic, Audit and Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees are webcast and	Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance/ Interim Head of ICT/Head of Revenues & Customer Service	√	The Council has made use of Microsoft Teams to hold Council and Committee meetings remotely and in a hybrid fashion. Recordings

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		archived for one year for public access			including of Area Committee meetings are shared via the Council website or YouTube.
		Guidance for Report Writing reinforces that all reports to Council and Committees must include the risks and implications of any decisions being taken, including Equality, Gaelic, Rural/Island and Poverty Impact Assessments	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	Ongoing	The Guidance will be kept under review with a particular focus on appropriate identification of risks and implications. Any changes will be disseminated to report writers.
		Continue to develop participatory budgeting across the Council area to ensure community participation in resource allocation.	Head of Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing programme	The Council agreed a new approach to participatory resourcing as part of the budget setting process. Public engagement will identify priorities for targeting funds to inform area committee decisions on allocations, including Coastal Communities Funds, Place Based Investment Funds, and Area Play Funds. As this approach evolves, the aim will be to include other mainstream budgets delegated to local level. This is already in action through the Highland –

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					Let's Talk Funding engagement exercise. Where Area Place Plans have been developed, e.g. Skye and Raasay Futures, the priorities are already directing the allocation and direction of spend of local funds. The roll out of Area Place Plans across Highland will further support greater local participation and involvement in service design, priority setting and delivery.
	Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	The Council is one of five lead partners within the Highland Community Planning Partnership. Work with partners to improve evidencing outcomes and performance reporting in order to deliver improved outcomes for Highland communities	Chief Executive	√	Performance Framework to support monitoring the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and delivery of effective outcomes is in place
		The Council will work with partners to put in place reviewed Terms of reference for the Community Planning Partnership to strengthen governance, accountability and delivery of outcomes.	Chief Executive	Complete	Reviewed terms of reference and a structure for the Community Planning Partnership were agreed by the Community Planning Board in December 2019

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		<p>The Highland Council is the lead organisation for the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal which is being delivered by a local partnership including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the University of Highlands and Islands and Albyn Housing Society Ltd. Funding is provided through the Scottish and UK governments and is managed by the Council. Regular monitoring reports are brought to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee.</p>	<p>Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Regular updates are presented to the Economy and Infrastructure Committee as part of refreshed scrutiny and governance arrangements. A Members' Monitoring Group has also been established.</p>
		<p>The Council has been successful in being awarded support from the Levelling Up Fund</p>	<p>Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	<p>A Programme Board has been established with stakeholders to oversee the delivery of the improvements to Inverness Castle, Northern Meeting Park and the Bught. The Board is chaired by the Inverness City Leader.</p>
		<p>The Council has strong engagement with the Police Service of Scotland and Scottish Fire & Rescue Service</p>	<p>Head of Community Support and Engagement</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Police and Fire scrutiny continues through Area Committees and twice a year through the Communities and Place Committee</p>

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		with scrutiny at both a strategic and local level			
		The Council engages with the voluntary and community sector through the Community Planning Partnership and the Highland Third Sector Interface as well as directly with community bodies, including Community Councils.	Head of Community Support and Engagement	√	There has been a broader approach taken to engagement across the Council with a focus on greater participation and involvement of communities in service, design, delivery and priority setting. This is supported by the agreement of the Place Based Framework and wider commitments to community planning and will be strengthened through the development of an Engagement and Involvement Strategy which will reflect how the organisation will engage and involve our communities in how we operate, and help support developing and improving our involvement and relationship with communities across Highland.
		The Council has a Health & Social Care Partnership with NHS Highland, based on a lead agency model, with NHS responsible for Adult Services and	Executive Chief Officer Health and Social Care	√	The Council and NHS Highland have agreed a revised Partnership Agreement with improved scrutiny and governance arrangements. The

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		the Council responsible for Children's Services			Agreement was approved by the Scottish Government in November 2021
		The Council has a Staff Partnership Forum in place for engagement with Trade Unions. Trade Unions are also represented on the Council's Redesign Board.	Interim Head of People	√	The Partnership Framework Agreement was reviewed and agreed at the Staff Partnership Forum in June 2021.
	Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	As part of the Redesign process, the Council agreed to be more community-minded by listening locally, widening participation in decision-making, supporting community bodies to do more and to target support to particular people and places most in need. Community Reviews form part of the Redesign process allowing co-reviewing of services/functions with communities. The Recovery Plan agreed in June 2020 identified eleven key priorities. The Sustainable Highland Health and Prosperity Strategy was agreed in March 2022.	Chief Executive	√	

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		<p>The Council engages with specific user groups on a range of issues including our tenants, through the tenant participation network, with parents through our Parent Councils and with young people through the youth work service and the Highland Youth Parliament.</p>	<p>Executive Chief Officers Education, Health and Social Care & Property and Housing</p>	<p>√</p>	
		<p>The Council holds a contact database of groups with an interest in equality, diversity and human rights issues and liaises with these groups to share information, engage and seek views on a range of issues.</p>	<p>Head of Community Support and Engagement</p>	<p>√</p>	
		<p>Under the Community Empowerment Act the Highland Community Planning Partnership has established 9 local partnerships which are engaging with communities to identify local issues and how outcomes can be improved for the local community, with a</p>	<p>Ward Managers and Executive Chief Officers</p>	<p>√</p>	

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		specific focus on reducing inequalities.			
		The Council has developed processes to support the aims, objectives and duties contained within the Community Empowerment Act. This supports communities to participate in the allocation of budgets, to be involved in improving service outcomes and to take on buildings or land in order to increase the benefits to the wider community.	Head of Community Support and Engagement	√	
		Community engagement is undertaken on a variety of service and policy issues and led by Service and Ward Managers.	Executive Chief Officers/Head of Service/Ward Managers	√	There have been increased levels of engagement with groups through the pandemic and work is underway to review how this is supported and what form this takes going forward. The new Community Support Co-ordinator role will assist in developing relationships and wider engagement with community and voluntary groups

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		The Council supports a network of community councils and engages and consults with them on a regular basis and on a range of issues in order to determine community views and responses from local communities.	Head of Community Support and Engagement	Ongoing	
C) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Defining outcomes	The Highland Council Programme for 2017-2022 set out a number of goals based on five themes: a place to live, a place to learn, a place to thrive, a welcoming place, and a redesigned Council. The new Council Programme will be supported by a performance framework including Corporate Plan and Service Plans which set out how performance and delivery will be monitored	Chief Executive	√	New Service Planning Guidance was issued in January 2022 and interim service plans in place in June 2022 in order to support the new political leadership (post May 2022 local government elections) develop the new Council programme. The new Council programme, Corporate Plan and updated service plans reflecting the Council's new strategic direction to be in place by the end of 2022.
		The redesign statement and statement of Council purpose, values and outcomes were initially agreed by the Council in June 2017 The Board met in September 2022 to agree a number of	Acting Depute Chief Executive	√	

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		major strategic projects for consideration and to re-establish a programme of Lean/Rapid Reviews			
		Annual Performance Report presented to Council to monitor delivery of outcomes and priorities	Chief Executive	√	
	Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	The Council is developing a Medium Term Financial Strategy to support the delivery of statutory responsibilities and delivery of the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan and will need to be developed in context of the current financial crisis	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	<p>In March 2022 the Council agreed a one year budget for 2022/23. As part of the budget the Council approved 'Sustainable Highland-Health and Prosperity Strategy 202/23' comprising investment in recovery and transformation.</p> <p>Ongoing development of the Medium Term Financial Plan will continue to be brought to Council meetings throughout 2022/23.</p> <p>The recommendations of the Council's Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) were received in March 2020. A BVAR Improvement Plan is in place which includes improvement in financial</p>

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					management and reporting. Progress in delivering BVAR improvement was reported to Council in September 2021 and will continue annually until the BVAR Improvement Plan is complete.
		The Council Capital Strategy and Programme to 2036/37 agreed in December 2021 supports the delivery of statutory responsibilities and delivery of the outcomes set out in the Council Programme	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)/ Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy	Ongoing	<p>Delivery of the Capital Programme is subject to regular update reporting to Council committees with overall financial impacts reported to the Corporate Resources Committee</p> <p>Given wider financial considerations a review of the programme is underway.</p> <p>The affordability of the Capital Programme will be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p>
		The Council's Redesign Board is focused on the Council being more open-minded to new ways of delivering services, more community-minded and more commercially-minded to ensure	Acting Depute Chief Executive	Ongoing	

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		service delivery is sustainable, affordable and aware of community impacts.			
		Budget management is the responsibility of budget holders and monitoring reports are presented to Committee quarterly	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	
		Corporate Risk Management is undertaken to ensure that the Council identifies and mitigates its key risks, in order to deliver its priorities and outcomes, and reported to every Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Executive Chief Officers/ Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	The Corporate Risk Strategy was refreshed and was approved by Audit and Scrutiny Committee in March 2021 and is kept under review. Quarterly reporting of Corporate Risk to Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) and Weekly Strategic Meeting is in place.
D) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Determining interventions	Options appraisals are undertaken to support significant changes in service delivery and used to inform decision making	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	√	
		The Redesign Board's approach includes a peer review process to appraise 10 options for service delivery. Peer reviews are overseen	Acting Depute Chief Executive	Ongoing programme	

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		by the Redesign Board made up of Members and Trade Union representatives.			
		Guidance for Report Writing reinforces that all reports to Council and Committees must include the risks and implications of any decisions being taken, including Equality Impact Assessments	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	Ongoing	The Guidance will be kept under review with a particular focus on appropriate identification of risks and implications. Any changes will be disseminated to report writers
		Financial Approach, agreed by Council, which includes prioritisation of services to manage competing demands within limited financial resources	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	
	Planning interventions	Corporate and Service Plans are produced and reviewed annually including being reported to Committee for scrutiny	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	√	. New Service Planning Guidance was issued in January 2022 and interim service plans in place in June 2022 in order to support the new political leadership (post May 2022 local government elections) develop the new Council programme. The new Council programme, Corporate Plan and updated service plans reflecting

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					the Council's new strategic direction to be in place by the end of 2022.
		Performance management arrangements includes quarterly performance reports to Committees for scrutiny. Ongoing performance management/ monitoring is managed through the Council's Performance & Risk Management System	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service/ Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	Service Management Teams continue to monitor performance throughout the year against Corporate and Service priorities and report quarterly to strategic Committees. Performance is continuously monitored within the Council's Performance & Risk Management System (PRMS). A Performance Management Board was established by the Chief Executive in May 2022 and meets weekly.
		The Council is subject to continuous external review on the delivery of Best Value with a detailed report every 5 years and annual commentary on progress in the Council's Annual External Audit Report	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	The Council was subject to a detailed BVAR during 2019 and this was reported along with an Improvement Plan to Council in March 2020. A Improvement Plan progress report was considered at Council in September 2021. The BVAR Improvement Plan and duty of Best Value will be an annual

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					element of external audit.
		Internal Audit Plan agreed annually and all audits are reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	The approval of the Internal Audit Plan was delayed due to Local Government elections and the Plan will be submitted to Audit and Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.
		The Council is developing a Medium Term Financial Strategy to support the delivery of statutory responsibilities and delivery of the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan and will need to be developed in the context of the current financial crisis.	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	In March 2022 the Council agreed a one year budget for 2022/23 As part of the budget the Council approved 'Sustainable Highland-Health and Prosperity Strategy 202/23' comprising investment in recovery and transformation Ongoing development of the Medium Term Financial Plan will continue to be brought to Council meetings throughout 2022/23.
		The Council Capital Strategy and Programme to 2036/37 agreed in December 2021 supports the delivery of statutory responsibilities and delivery of the	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)/ Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure, Environment and Economy	Ongoing	Delivery of the Capital Programme is subject to regular update reporting to Council committees with overall financial impacts reported to the Corporate Resources Committee

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		outcomes set out in the Council Programme.			<p>Given wider financial considerations a review of the programme is underway.</p> <p>The affordability of the Capital Programme will be incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p>
E) Developing the entity's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Developing the entity's capacity	Performance management arrangements include quarterly performance reports to Committees for scrutiny and an Annual Performance Report to Council Ongoing performance management/ monitoring is managed through the Council's Performance & Risk Management System	Chief Executive	√	New arrangements have been outlined in the Directorate Service Plans with reporting to Strategic Committees on a quarterly basis. New service Plans will be in place following the local government elections by the end of 2022. Annual performance reports are submitted to Council in September each year. Performance is continually monitored through PRMS. A Performance Governance Board was established by the Chief executive in May 2022 and meets weekly.
		Budget monitoring is reported to Committee quarterly and the Annual Accounts are reported to Audit &	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	

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		Scrutiny Committee and Council			
		Performance against Statutory Performance Indicators and comparison with performance against other Scottish Councils is reported to Council annually	Chief Executive	√	In March annually Council considers a report on Statutory Performance Indicators and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
		Corporate Workforce Strategy in place and development of Service and Corporate Workforce Plans in progress	Executive Chief Officers, Heads of Service & Interim Head of People	Ongoing	Recommendations from the Workforce Planning and Development review confirmed the 2017-22 Strategy is fit for purpose. A revised Corporate Workforce Strategy is being developed and will be submitted to committee for approval. Service Workforce Plans are also being developed and will be submitted to Service Committees.
		The remit and work plan for the Council's Redesign Board was initially agreed by the Council in June 2017. The Board met in September 2022 to agree a number of major strategic projects for consideration and to re-establish a programme of Lean/Rapid Reviews.	Acting Depute Chief Executive	√	The Redesign Board reports directly to the Council

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		<p>The work of the Council's Redesign Board places staff at the centre of identifying the change that is needed and implementing that change. This includes staff involvement in peer reviews of services, in Lean reviews of functions, peer spending reviews and in communicating improvement ideas.</p>	<p>Acting Depute Chief Executive</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
		<p>A number of significant Partnerships in place which deliver benefits in terms of efficiency and service improvement - for example Health & Social Care Partnership, High Life Highland, ICT Partnerships and Highland City Region Deal</p>	<p>Executive Chief Officers</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Update reports on Project Dòchas are reported to every meeting of Corporate Resources Committee.</p>
	<p>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</p>	<p>Job and Role Descriptions in place for Officers and Elected Members and effective arrangements in place for joint working</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>Joint Leadership training incorporated in the Leadership, Culture and Performance priority in the Recovery Plan</p>

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		Scheme of Delegation to Committees and Officers is in place and is reviewed and updated annually	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Ongoing	The Council's Scheme of Delegation was reviewed and amended in March 2022. Any further amendments and revisals will be reported to Council in October 2022.
		Member Induction Programme delivered for new Council and on-going Member Development Programme is being developed to support individual and collective capacity and capability	Executive Chief Officer- Performance and Governance	√	Development of the refreshed Programme which will include elements of knowledge testing is progressing
		The Employee Review & Development process ensures that all employees have an annual review of their objectives, performance and support for their training and development needs	Executive Chief Officers, Heads of Service & Interim Head of People	√	A new Learning Management System is being developed.
		Lessons learnt are shared through formal management meetings (e.g. ELT, SLT) and, where appropriate, through reports to committee (e.g. internal Audit Reports to Audit & Scrutiny Committee)	Executive Chief Officers/Heads of Service/ Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	
		Corporate Health & Well-being Strategy in place supported by an Occupation Health provider and strong	Executive Chief Officers and Heads of Service	√	In March 2020 the Council launched an Employee Assistance Programme including free confidential service

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		trade union engagement through Health & Safety Committees and a network of trade union Health & Safety Representatives			for all staff, their partners and dependants over the age of 16
F) Managing the risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Managing risk	Corporate Risk Management is undertaken to ensure that the Council identifies and mitigates its key risks, in order to deliver its priorities and outcomes, and reported to every Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Executive Chief Officers/ Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	The Corporate Risk Strategy has been refreshed and was approved by Audit and Scrutiny Committee in March 2021 and is kept under review. Quarterly reporting of Corporate Risk to Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Strategic Leadership Group (SLG) and Weekly Strategic Meeting is in place.
		Guidance for Report Writing reinforces that all reports to Council and Committees must include the risks and implications of any decisions being taken, including Equality Impact Assessments	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	Ongoing	The Guidance will be kept under review with a particular focus on appropriate identification of risks and implications. Any changes will be disseminated to report writers
		Project Management Policy in place which identifies the process for effective risk management and the reporting and governance arrangements required	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	√	

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	Managing performance	Performance management arrangements, include quarterly performance reports to Committees for scrutiny and an Annual Performance Report to Council. Ongoing performance management/ monitoring is managed through the Council's Performance & Risk Management System (PRMS)	Chief Executive	√	Performance reporting to Strategic Committees is in place quarterly. New Service Plans will be agreed in line with a new Council Programme and Corporate Plan (following local government elections in May 2022) by the end of 2022. Annual performance reports are submitted to Council in September each year. Performance is continually monitored through PRMS. A Performance and Governance Board was established by the Chief Executive in May 2022 and meets weekly.
		Budget monitoring is reported to Strategic Committees quarterly and the Annual Accounts are reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee and Council	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	
		Performance against Statutory Performance Indicators and comparison with performance against other Scottish Councils is reported to Council annually	Chief Executive	√	In March annually the Council considers a report on Statutory Performance Indicators and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
		Performance report for the Corporate Plan to include analysis against targets, benchmarks, family group and national averages	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	March and September annually	In March annually the Council considers a report on Statutory Performance Indicators and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. In September annually the Council receives an annual performance report centred on delivery of the Corporate Plan.
		Guidance for Report Writing reinforces that all reports to Council and Committees must include the risks and implications of any decisions being taken, including Equality Impact Assessments	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	Ongoing	The Guidance will be kept under review with a particular focus on appropriate identification of risks and implications. Any changes will be disseminated to report writers
		Strategic Committee structure in place which supports policy development, effective decision making and scrutiny of delivery and performance. These are now supported by sub-committees, Boards and member seminars/briefings where appropriate which will increase	Chief Executive	√	

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
		Councillor capacity to engage in policy development			
		Audit & Scrutiny Committee in place which is chaired by an opposition Councillor provides effective oversight and assurance	Chief Executive	√	
	Robust internal control	Audit & Scrutiny Committee receives an Annual Internal Audit Report which provides an audit opinion upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	
	Managing data	Information and Data Strategy and supporting policies in place, including handling of personal data, and management of records under the governance of the Information Governance Board chaired by the Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance. Records Management Plan	Executive Chief Officer- Performance and Governance/Data Protection Officer	√	

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
		approved by National Records of Scotland			
		PSN Accreditation is assessed annually through an external IT security health check to provide assurance about network and infrastructure security in relation to personal and other sensitive data	Interim Head of ICT	√	
		Access to IT systems and data is controlled using a layered approach. Network access is either via Scottish Wide area Network (SWAN) – a secure public sector network linking all Council sites- or via VPN for remote and home working. Users are authenticated via a cloud authentication service.	Interim Head of ICT	√	
		Information is handled appropriately and securely. Staff receive appropriate training to handle information. Risks associated with information assets are regularly reviewed	Information Asset Owners/Information Asset Managers	√	

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
		Data Sharing Agreements in place with key partners to enable safe and secure sharing of data across other bodies	Information Asset Owners/Data Protection Officer	√	
	Strong public financial management	Budget monitoring is reported to Committee quarterly and the Annual Accounts are reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee and Council	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	
		The Council is developing a Medium Term Financial Strategy to support the delivery of statutory responsibilities and delivery of the outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan and will need to be developed in context of the current financial crisis.	Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	<p>In March 2022 the Council agreed a one year budget for 2022/23 As part of the budget the Council approved 'Sustainable Highland-Health and Prosperity Strategy 202/23' comprising investment in recovery and transformation</p> <p>Ongoing development of the Medium Term Financial Plan will continue to be brought to Council meetings throughout 2022/23.</p> <p>Improvements in financial management and medium-long term financial planning were identified in the Council's Best Value</p>

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
					Audit Report (BVAR) and an improvement plan was agreed in March 2020 which is monitored with annual reports to Council from September 2021 ongoing until the plan is completed.
G) implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability	Implementing good practice in transparency	Guidance for Report Writing reinforces that all reports to Council and Committees must include the risks and implications of any decisions being taken, including Equality Impact Assessments	Executive Chief Officers & Heads of Service	√	The Guidance will be kept under review with a particular focus on appropriate identification of risks and implications. Any changes will be disseminated to report writers
		All Agendas and accompanying reports are published on the Council's Website and all Council, Strategic and Regulatory Meetings are webcast and archived for public access	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer) Head of Revenue & Customer Service and Interim Head of ICT.	√	The Council has made use of Microsoft Teams to hold Council and Committee meetings remotely and in a hybrid fashion. Recordings including of Area Committee meetings are shared via the Council website or YouTube.
	Implementing good practice in reporting	Annual and Quarterly reporting on Performance and Budget Monitoring, to Council and Strategic Committees	Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance/ Head of Corporate Finance (Section 95 Officer)	√	

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
		Annual Governance Statement published as part of Annual Accounts and reported to Council and Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance	√	
		Code of Corporate Governance reviewed annually and reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Head of Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	√	
		Performance against Statutory Performance Indicators and comparison with performance against other Scottish Councils is reported to Council annually	Chief Executive	√	In March annually the Council considers a report on Statutory Performance Indicators and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
	Assurance and effective accountability	Internal Audit Plan agreed annually and all audits are reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee, also tracking of actions arising from reports is monitored by the Committee	Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	
		Internal Audit Service in place which reports directly to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Chief Executive	√	
		Annual Scrutiny Plan and Annual Report from Audit Scotland is reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee	Chief Executive	√	

Core Principle	Sub Principle	Commitment/Action	Responsible Officer*	Completed/Target Date	Further Comments
		National Audits reported to Council and/or Audit & Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the Council takes any learning points and actions necessary	Executive Chief Officer – Performance and Governance/ Strategic Lead Corporate Audit and Performance	√	Progress on the Best Value Audit Improvement Plan was reported to Council in September 2021. and will continue annually until complete. National external audit reports submitted to Council, Audit & Scrutiny or Strategic Committee as appropriate.
		Corporate Risk Register includes any risks arising from service delivery by third parties	Executive Chief Officers	√	
		Scrutiny of key partnerships undertaken at Council and Strategic Committees and annual reports of ALEO's made to appropriate Committee	Executive Chief Officers	√	

- The identity/designation of the Officer may change as a result of the Restructure of responsibilities within Directorates

Updated September 2022