

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 22 JANUARY 2026
Subject	LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrea McCaskie, Director of Governance & Regulatory Services (Monitoring Officer) Email: andrea.mccaskie@westoxon.gov.uk
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Summary/Purpose	To present the latest version of the Local Code of Corporate Governance for adoption by West Oxfordshire District Council
Annexes	Annex A – The Local Code of Corporate Governance (showing changes) Annex B – The Local Code of Corporate Governance (clean version) Annex C – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: framework. Addendum, covering the annual review of governance and the annual governance statement.
Recommendation(s)	That the Audit and Governance Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Review and adopt the latest version of the Local Code of Corporate Governance.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	N/A

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To present to the Audit and Governance Committee the reviewed Local Code of Corporate Governance ('the Code') for adoption by the Committee and Council.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Code is a document which sets out the framework within which West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') will conduct its business and affairs. It is best practice for all Local Authorities to develop a local code of corporate governance.

2.2 The Local Code of Corporate Governance has been reviewed and is presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for adoption following the publication of the addendum in May 2025 of Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework.

2.3 The Code sets the overarching principles, which underpin the governance framework for the Council. On an annual basis, the Council will produce the Annual Governance Statement which details how it has delivered against the Code and its priorities (backward looking) and will produce an Annual Governance Statement Action Plan (forward looking) which details key areas for improvement over the financial year to ensure ongoing compliance and continuous improvement.

2.4 The Annual Governance Statement and Action plan are presented to the Audit and Governance Committee with progress against the Annual Governance Action Plan presented on a 6-monthly basis.

3. MAIN POINTS

3.1 Corporate governance is about the systems, processes, and values by which councils operate and by which they engage with and are held accountable to their communities and stakeholders.

3.2 The Council is committed to the principles of effective corporate governance and has therefore adopted a Code. This version has been updated to reflect the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework, Addendum, covering the annual review of governance and the annual governance statement issued by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), and approved by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) May 2025 ('the Framework Addendum'). This update will also be applied to the 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement which will be presented to Committee in June 2026.

3.3 The Framework Addendum defines the seven core principles, each supported by sub-principles that should underpin the governance framework of a local authority.

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rules of law.
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

3.4 The Council has a good governance framework in place. The documents and arrangements which comprise the framework demonstrate that the Council continually seeks to ensure it is and remains, well governed, through integration of the core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework into all aspects of the Council's conduct and operation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee reviews the revised Code attached at Annex A showing the tracked changes and agrees to adopt the clean version of the Code attached at Annex B.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

8. If the Council's governance arrangements are weak then the Council is at risk of failing to safeguard the use of public funds. In turn this would lead to poor external assessments, damaging the reputation of the Council.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 An equalities impact assessment is not required for this report.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no climate or ecological emergency implications arising from this report.

II. BACKGROUND PAPERS

II.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

- The Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025
- The Annual Governance Action Plan 2025/2026

II.2 These documents will be available for inspection online at www.westoxon.gov.uk or by contacting democratic services democratic@westoxon.gov.uk for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting.