



Penrith Town Council

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Penrith Town Council aims to ensure that the Council is run in a lawful and business-like manner, which reflects best practice. It will provide good governance through clear and effective decision-making and by providing clarity about responsibilities and accountability. In applying the principles embodied in this Code of Corporate Governance, it will provide confidence in service delivery and decision-making.
- 1.2 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) have published a framework of Corporate Governance in Local Authorities. The Council has considered this framework and applied it in its Code of Corporate Governance. The CIPFA/SOLACE framework is based on the following seven principles:
- **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT:** Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder agreement.
 - **BENEFITS:** Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
 - **SERVICE DELIVERY:** Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
 - **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT:** Developing the entity's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
 - **RISK MANAGEMENT and INTERNAL CONTROL:** Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
 - **TRANSPARENCY and ACCOUNTABILITY:** Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability
- 1.3 Penrith Town Council is committed to the principles of good corporate governance. Penrith Town Council accepts and is committed to the adoption, development, and maintenance of a code of corporate governance as recommended by the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance*. The Local Government Association supports the Code.
- 1.4 Penrith Town Council has a key role in leading and governing the community of Penrith. The Code of Corporate Governance will assist the Town Council in fulfilling this role.
- 1.5 The Code has been developed to ensure that the Town Council has, and will continue to have, exemplary standards of governance, which comply with best practice.
- 1.6 Good corporate governance supports effective decision-making. Effective decision-making in a well governed organisation is based on:

- A well-balanced accountability framework that has clear communication and understanding across the organisation of roles and responsibilities
 - Robust performance, financial, risk and information management systems
 - High standards of conduct
- 1.7 The Council will carry out regular assessments to monitor the application of the Code and ensure that it is applied in practice.
- 1.8 The Council will produce an annual statement setting out how the Code is being met; how its effectiveness is, being monitored and what changes are intended to be made, if any, in the future. The annual statement will be considered formally by the Council as an integral part of the end of year Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.9 The Appendix to this code records the Council’s progress against each of the seven principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework and how they are applied in practice.

2. Governance

- 2.1 The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework’s approach to corporate governance is:

"To ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities, that there is sound and inclusive decision making and that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities."

"The Framework position the attainment of sustainable economic, societal, and environmental outcomes as a key focus of the governance processes and structures. Outcomes give the role of local government its meaning and importance...Local authorities have responsibilities to more than their current electors as they must take account of the impact of current decisions and actions on future generations."

- 2.2 Good governance leads to good management, good performance, the proper stewardship of public money, ethical behaviour, effective public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes for residents and service users. Good governance enables councils to pursue their visions effectively as well as underpinning their vision with mechanisms for control and the management of risk.

- 2.3 The Town Council is committed to the seven principles of good governance and thus ensuring it has and applies appropriate standards of governance.
- 2.4 The Town Council is committed to the Local Council Award Scheme and the standards contained within the Scheme for the Gold Standard. The commitment to the Local Council Award Scheme and the Gold Standard complements the Code of Corporate Governance. The attainment of the Gold Standard is indicative that the Town Council:
- a) Is at the forefront of best practice;
 - b) Has achieved excellence in governance, community leadership, and council development;
 - c) Provides leadership;
 - d) Brings people together;
 - e) Has excellent business planning processes;
 - f) Ensures value for money;
 - g) Is seeking new innovations and opportunities to improve; and
 - h) Is achieving for its communities.
- 2.5 The Town Council makes decisions, which can affect and have an impact on individuals, communities and the environment now and in the short, medium and long terms. The Town Council's decisions should be sound, proper and reasonable. In making its decisions the Town Council will adhere to the Code of Corporate Governance and be able to demonstrate that its decisions are reasonable, evidence based, ethically sound, provide value for money, are made in accordance with its policies and procedures and legal requirements, are made as collaboratively as possible and are communicated openly and transparently.

3. Social Value

- 3.1 In applying the Code of Corporate Governance, the Council will take account of and apply the principles expressed in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Under the Act, consideration is given as to how services should be commissioned and how procurement might improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area.
- 3.2 The Council will seek to bring people together and achieve for its communities. The Council will show and provide leadership and commit to seeking continuous improvement in the delivery of services. The Council's approach will reflect and be based upon what is best in the interests of the Council, the town and the residents of Penrith.
- 3.3 The impact of the Council's spending decisions will be considered so that the best possible outcomes are secured for the locality and residents. The Council will seek to apply ethical principles in procurement and the highest practicable standards will be sought.
- 3.4 The Council procures goods and services. If goods and services can be purchased locally, skill levels can be raised employment can be maintained and environmental impacts can be lessened. The Council will commit to playing an active role in the community whilst protecting the environment and minimising waste and energy consumption.
- 3.5 If resources are used wisely, sustainability can be promoted. The environment can be protected and enhanced together with ensuring the efficient use of resources and delivering value for money. The long-term costs and impacts of decisions should be considered whenever possible.

4. The principal systems, processes and elements of the council's governance arrangements

- 4.1 The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of all its committees, its Members and all officers have responsibility for ensuring that there is good governance within Penrith Town Council.
- 4.2 The systems and processes in place to provide good governance are:
- The Council has approved policies and procedures.
 - The Council's internal Finance and Governance Schedule.
 - The Council's internal Policy and Procedures Review Schedule
 - The Internal Review mechanisms
 - The Risk Management Policy
 - The Internal Control Policy
 - The preparation and application of Risk Assessments
 - The commissioning and undertaking of Audits, both internal and external.
- 4.3 The key elements of the corporate governance arrangements are:
- Council Standing Orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - The Audit arrangements
 - The Scheme of Delegation
 - The Publication Scheme
 - The Members Code of Conduct
 - The Officers' code
 - Business planning
 - Performance management.
- 4.4 The Finance Committee is responsible for maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements through the committee reporting process and audit reports.
- 4.5 Actions taken, or actions planned to address significant governance issues will be considered initially by the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee makes recommendations to Full Council on governance issues for consideration and adoption.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1 Local Authorities should test their governance structures and partnership arrangements against the principles contained in the framework by:
- Reviewing existing governance arrangements.
 - Agreeing and keeping up to date the local code of governance.
 - On an annual basis, reporting publicly on compliance with their own code, detailing how they have monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year together with any changes that are planned to ensure an effective, enduring operation.
- 5.2 The Council will undertake an annual review of its governance arrangements to ensure that they are adequate and operating effectively in accordance with best practice.
- 5.3 Where gaps or errors are identified, action will be taken to ensure improvement in future governance arrangements.
- 5.4 The findings of the annual review will be presented to the Council's Finance Committee which makes recommendations to Full Council.
- 5.5 The outcome of this review will inform and underpin the Council's Annual Governance Statement.
- 5.6 The review will provide evidence of compliance for the Local Council Award Scheme Gold Standard with evidence statements included with the review.

6. How the council meets the seven principles: Executive Summary

a) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.

Local Authorities are accountable for how much they spend and for how they use the resources in their stewardship. Local authorities should serve the public interest and adhere to legislative requirements. Local authorities should have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

- i. The Council has codes of conduct for both Members and staff. The Council has an ethos and an expectation of ethical compliance. The Council has established and applies a range of policies and procedures across its activities in compliance with legislation and proper practice. In working collaboratively with other people, groups and bodies the Council will seek to identify and establish shared values and approaches. In making procurement decisions the Council will comply with the law, act in accordance with its established policies and take account of social value considerations. The Council will ensure that its relevant standards are made known to and applied by any external provider of its services.
- ii. The Council is committed to the highest standards of conduct in all its activities. Members and officers are expected to conduct themselves as role models for others to emulate, and adhere to the standards of personal behaviour applicable to all Members and staff.
- iii. The Council will always seek to ensure that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices.
- iv. The Council will only do what it has the legal power to do and will comply with Proper Practices in carrying out its activities. The Council has and intends to retain the General Power of Competence and will seek to use its powers for the benefit of the town and its social, economic and environmental well-being.

b) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, including individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders.

- i. The Council will work for and with the people of Penrith, exercising leadership when it is right to do so and do its best to promote the well-being of the town and its residents as identified in the Council Plan.
- ii. The Council will value the contributions of and from the community and give them due consideration. The Council aims to strengthen local democracy and local decision-making and encourage inclusivity in its decision-making. The Council will be open and transparent in making decisions. It will seek to engage with others collaboratively whenever it is appropriate to do so. It will publish information relating to its activities. The Council will apply its consultation and communication policies to enable engagement.

c) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that they should be sustainable. Decisions should further the Authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

- i. The Council has established effective political and managerial structures and processes to govern decision-making and the exercise of its powers and functions. The Council Business Plan sets out the key strategic objectives and priorities. The Council will take due and proper account of risk.
- ii. The Council will seek to secure and provide long term, sustainable benefits to enhance the social, economic and environmental well-being of Penrith and its residents. The Council supports sustainable and appropriate developments as identified the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Council is supportive of sustainable public and community transport schemes and sustainable employment and aims to protect the town's facilities for the benefit of all.

d) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions or courses of action. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local authorities have to make to ensure the intended outcomes are achieved. Robust decision-making mechanisms are needed to ensure that the defined outcomes can be achieved in effective and efficient ways. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that the achievement of outcomes is optimised.

- i. The Council provides detailed reports for consideration and approval on its functions and activities, which are publicly available to provide transparency. The Council is committed to seeking continuous improvement in all its activities and services.

e) Developing the entity's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve intended outcomes within any specified periods. A local authority must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the Authority as a whole. Individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time so that there will be a continuous need to develop capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual members of staff. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

- i. The Council regularly reviews its management of its resources. The Council is mindful that it needs to have sufficient capacity to carry out its functions, objectives and priorities and consequently reviews its resources. The Council aims to work collaboratively and in partnership whenever this is appropriate and beneficial and in so doing may make the best and most effective use of its resources.

f) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Local Authorities need to ensure that its governance structures have effective performance management systems that facilitate the efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, a strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny be in place as a key part of accountable decision-making, policymaking and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

- i. The Council has a risk management policy. Risk management supports the effective delivery of the Council's objectives. Reports to Council and committees refer to and highlight any relevant risk considerations and issues. The Council has sound financial management, processes and structures. Internal controls are substantial and robust.

g) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

- i. The Council's reports are accessible and publicly available to all on its website. The Council's processes and decision-making are transparent. The information, which is available, is that which is required by statute and good practice. The Council produces an annual report and will produce an annual governance statement. The Council holds an annual meeting to which all residents are invited. The Council publishes all of its internal and external audit reports. Members of the public are able to examine and challenge the Council's accounts.

7. How the council meets the Seven Principles: Long Form

The tables given below are extracted from the CIPFA / SOLACE publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016 Edition)", together with the associated guidance manual. The first column of the table sets out the requirements as stated in the Framework. The second column sets out the position at Penrith Town Council (PTC) and provides a summary of the evidence that supports the position that the arrangements currently operating at PTC are fit for purpose.

Standards of conduct

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Local authorities are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes, they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

Outcome

The Council is committed to the highest standards of conduct in all its activities. Members and officers are expected to conduct themselves as role models for others to emulate, and adhere to the standards of personal behaviour applicable to all Members and staff.

The Council seeks to ensure that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices.

The Council only does what it has the legal power to do and will comply with Proper Practices in doing so. The Council will seek to use its powers for the benefit of the town and its social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

Behaving with Integrity

Ensuring Members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the Council.

Position at PTC

- The Council has developed and adopted formal codes of conduct defining the standards of personal behaviour which individual Members, and officers of the Council are required to meet and put in place appropriate systems and processes to ensure that they are complied with.
- The Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and approved policy documents provide an organisational and operational framework, which sets out the standards and expectations that the Council's actions are open and transparent.
- The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members and a Member and Officer Relations Policy.
- The Council has approved a Bullying and Harassment, Complaints Procedure and a Whistleblowing Policy, which has been communicated to Members and staff.
- Members and staff are made aware of the Codes of Conduct in inductions which cover the standards of behaviour expected and required.
- Each Member receives a copy of the NALC Good Councillor Guide and NALC Good Councillor Guide on Finance and Transparency.
- Each Member and Officer is provided with training opportunities and the Councils has an approved Training Policy.
- Individual Performance Appraisals are an established part of the Council's Performance Management processes and systems.
- Officers are required to undertake Continuous Professional Development.
- The roles and responsibilities of Members and officers are clearly defined in the Member and Officer Relations Policy.
- The terms of reference for committees and the Scheme of Delegation set out the roles and responsibilities of the Council, its committees and officers.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

Behaving with Integrity	Position at PTC
Ensuring Members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has Council, Committee, and Members informal meetings and training opportunities, which help to ensure effective engagement with the values of the Council.• All councillors are encouraged to complete a Personal Development Plan.• A register of Member training is maintained• Staff manuals are provided during induction, performance monitoring and regular team meetings are held.• Members and officers establish and abide by the codes and standards of the organisation.• Opportunities for continuing personal and professional development are encouraged and advice and mentoring is made available and accessible to all.• The Council's standards are expected to be applied and are monitored when working with the community and partners.
Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision making protocols and powers are set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.• For delegated decisions, the originating officer must ensure that the decision has been appropriately taken, and that appropriate advice has been taken into account together with any consultation responses.• All decision-making committees appropriately record and minute resolutions.• Where appropriate delegated decisions are formally recorded and published.• All meetings include a formal requirement to declare at the outset any interests and for Members to leave the meeting whilst items involving a potential conflict of interest are considered.• The Council Plan guides decision-making.• All Council and Committee reports are referenced against Council Plan priorities.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

Behaving with Integrity	Position at PTC
<p>Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council maintains up to date registers of interests, gifts and hospitality in respect of both Members and officers. • A complaints policy/procedure is in place which records action in respect of both service issues and behaviour. • Where appropriate complaints are used to drive service improvement. • The Code of Conduct require interests to be registered and declared and they are recorded in the relevant minutes. • The Members’ declarations of interest are published and accessible.
<p>Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation’s standards and performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a strong ‘ethos’ of ethical standards which help to ensure effective ethical compliance. • The Council seeks to employ staff with or develop them to have a knowledge and experience of local government and governance, which enables lawful and ethical performance and the Council’s integrity to be maintained.
<p>Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation’s culture and operation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations regarding behaviour and values are made clear in Council and Committee meetings. • The Council has put in place arrangements to ensure that Members and employees of the Council should not be influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with matters and with different stakeholders. Interests are required to be registered and declared. • Members Register of Interests are updated regularly. • A standing agenda item requests that participants declare any interests on matters to be considered at the meeting.
<p>Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures, which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Council meet regularly to set the strategic direction of the Council, to determine policy and monitor service delivery • The Code of Conduct requires Members to uphold the prescribed ethical values and standards. • The employee job descriptions set out required standards. • Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

Behaving with Integrity	Position at PTC
Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has a Procurement Policy and a Partnership Protocol.• The Council considers, before entering into a partnership, if the arrangement would be consistent with the principles of accountability and governance, which the Council applies to its own internal arrangements.• Relevant standards are made known to external providers of services and monitored.• The Councils approved Partnership Protocol supports the development, monitoring and audit of external providers.• The Council has appropriate staffing and procedures to manage arrangements effectively.

Respecting the rule of law

Behaving with Integrity	Position at PTC
Ensuring Members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The culture of the Council is based upon a commitment to operating lawfully and within the statutory and regulatory framework.• The Council’s Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Policies and Procedures are established and applied.• All reports contain a section detailing any legal implications.• All officers are appropriately trained to undertake their duties in line with the legal requirements and best practice.• The governance, constitutional, statutory and general administration and personnel operations of the Town Council are carried out by a CiLCA qualified Town Clerk who acts as the Council’s Chief Executive Officer. The Town Clerk carries out all functions required by law and issues statutory notifications and documentation.• The Services and Contracts Manager is a qualified clerk.• The Council has an in-house solicitor.
Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council is an outward looking organisation aware of the opportunities open to it with an ambitious Council Business Plan to deliver.• An agreement to objectives, projects, plans and targets is reached within the context of a developed understanding of legal requirements and best practice and the Council Business Plan priorities.• The Council has the General Power of Competence, which it can apply for the benefit of its communities.
Dealing with any breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has appropriately qualified and knowledgeable officers in post.• Where necessary appropriate external advice is sought.• The Council seeks to operate a ‘no blame’ culture where a disclosure of any actual or potential error is encouraged.

Ensuring improper behaviour, any corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

- The Council has a range of policies in place, which promote positive behaviour and provide effective sanctions to deal with any breach effectively.
- Where necessary the Council will refer issues of improper behaviour or criminality to the appropriate external agency.

Community Engagement

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation are and should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, including individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders.

The Council will continue to work for and with the people of Penrith, exercising leadership when it is right to do so and do its best to promote the well-being of the town and its residents.

Outcome

The Council works for and with the people of Penrith, exercising leadership when it is right to do so and do its best to promote the well-being of the town and its residents as identified in the Council Plan.

The Council values the contributions of and from the community and give them due consideration. The Council aims to strengthen local democracy and local decision-making, encouraging inclusivity in its decision-making and acts in an open and transparent manner when making decisions.

The Council actively collaborates with stakeholders whenever it is appropriate to do so, publishing information relating to its activities.

Community Engagement	
Openness	Position at PTC
Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the Council's commitment to openness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council takes the vast majority of its decisions in public session. Matters are only considered in private session when this is the most appropriate course of action and in compliance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960. • The Council complies with the Transparency Code and provides information and details of its activities and decisions on its website. • The Council has adopted and applies a Communication Policy.
Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential will be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where decisions are taken in private session a public minute will be made available which will provide information on the matter, which was discussed and decided. • Proper reasons for considering any matter in private session will always be given and be publicly available. • Reports to Council are provided on decisions to be made and the Council seeks to provide and consider robust information on which to base every decision.
Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. Ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reports are based upon a standard document template, which covers a range of issues including legal implications, finance, and risk. • All reports are agreed by the relevant officers to ensure appropriate issues are addressed and standards are maintained. • The Council publishes information in an objective and understandable form. • The Council publishes its statement of accounts annually in both electronic and paper format.

Community Engagement	
<p>Openness</p> <p>Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/courses of action</p>	<p>Position at PTC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council uses a range of mechanisms for consultation, which are set out in the Consultation Policy. • Forums for engaging citizens include Council and Committee Meetings where there is a designated opportunity for the public to make representations; dialogue, public meetings, resident associations, and reviewing individual complaints. • The Council actively encourages engagement by Members of the Community through its website, and in its Community Engagement Policy. • Effective community engagement is a strategic priority for the Council. • The Council has established the Dialogue website to engage with residents and enable them to become involved with and generate suggestions relating to the issues facing the town. • The Council uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and has an approved Social Media Policy
<p>Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a Communications Strategy. • The Council utilises its website and other media to provide information. • The Council seeks to engage collaboratively with others and identify the outcomes which it seeks in engaging with other stakeholders.

Community Engagement	
Openness	
Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders	Position at PTC
Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used and outcomes achieved more effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is developing relationships with a network of local organisations, which helps to co-ordinate a range of interventions across the town. • The Council engages with other bodies and people to pursue initiatives and deal with issues facing the town.
Ensuring that partnerships are based on: trust, a shared commitment to change, a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's representatives on partnerships are required to reflect and champion the Council's values within those partnerships. • The partners' organisational framework and purpose must be compatible with the Council's values for the Council to participate.
Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has established Communications, Community Engagement and Consultation strategies. • The Consultation Policy records its approach to consultation and that the Council promotes a "no surprise" policy. • The Council has a Petitions Policy. • In addition to structured consultations the Council gives careful consideration to complaints and other feedback to understand whether there are emerging trends which need to be addressed. • The Council has established the Dialogue website to engage with residents enable them to become involved with and generate suggestions relating to the issues facing the town.
Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that Members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will review its communication methods to ensure that they are effective and are responsive to and take account of any comments, feedback or representations it receives.

Community Engagement	
Openness	
Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively	Position at PTC
Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has in place a wide range of engagement mechanisms including public meetings, web-based consultation and engaging with difficult to reach groups including young people. • These are supported by targeted surveys, questionnaires and focus groups. • The Council has in place appropriate policies in respect of Equality and Diversity to help ensure that it adheres to good practice.
Implementing effective feedback mechanisms to demonstrate how views have been taken into account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of consultation exercises are reported to Members to ensure that consultation informs service delivery and decision-making. • Public participation is included on the agenda for each public meeting. • The Council publicises calendars of meetings and circulates agenda papers to the press, district and county councillors. • The Council is committed to openness in all its dealings, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.
Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Communication and Engagement Strategy is delivered to ensure a balanced and inclusive approach.
Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of taxpayers and service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All decisions are made taking account of detailed reports which address service delivery issues together with the financial and other implications of any initiative and, where appropriate, sustainability issues and the medium and long term perspectives.

In addition to the overarching requirements for acting in the public interest in principles A and B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

8. Structures & processes

Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the organisation's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

Outcome

The Council has established effective political and managerial structures and processes to govern decision-making and the exercise of its powers and functions.

Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Defining Outcomes	Position at PTC
<p>Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the Council's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a Council Plan in place which sets out the key strategic objectives and priorities. • Progress in delivering the Council Business Plan is managed through Work Plan monitoring and individual performance management, with outcomes reported regularly to Council and Committees.
<p>Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These impacts are set out in the Council Plan. • Where appropriate new initiatives and their impacts are detailed in Committee and Council reports.
<p>Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each report contains a financial impact report and comments on appropriate sustainability issues. • Regular budgeting review takes place with reports to Council.
<p>Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a robust Risk Management Framework in place, which covers both Strategic and Service risks. • The Councils approach to risks is reviewed and audited throughout the year by the Responsible Finance Officer and the Service and Contracts Manager, and the internal and external auditors. • Robust risk assessments are in place for the effective control and management of the Town Council facilities, assets. • Health and Safety risk assessments and fire risk assessments are undertaken using sector specific documentation or following advice received from reliable specific sources • The format of Committee reports ensure that issues of risk are and are required to be integral to the decision-making process.

Sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Defining Outcomes	Position at PTC
<p>Managing service users' expectations effectively to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council regularly reviews the availability of resources and responds to users demands as and when they arise. • The Council uses SAGE and Excel accounting software and produces financial reports on a monthly and quarterly basis along with analytical budget reports in collaboration with the Councils external accountancy service which is responsible for dealing with the HMRC, payroll, and pensions.
<p>Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council adopts and pursues a balanced approach to considering financial and service delivery issues when planning new initiatives. • The Council considers how services are commissioned and how procurement could improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the town.
<p>Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment and other decisions are taken based on robust, thorough and sound reports. • The Council recognises that its decisions may have short, medium and long-term consequences. The Council will consider those consequences and the impact of its decisions to secure the best possible outcomes for the town and its residents.
<p>Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council recognises that consensus will not always be possible and that people will have different views and perspectives on issues. The Council will seek to understand and consider different views and make decisions which are considered to be in the best interests of the town and its residents as a whole.
<p>Ensuring fair access to services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a firm commitment to equality of access, with its commitment being expressed in a range of policies.

9. Service delivery

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

Outcome

The Council is committed to seeking continuous improvement in all its services and activities.

Determining Interventions	Position at PTC
<p>Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore, ensuring best value is achieved however, services are provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive reports are provided setting out both recommended options and those options, which have been considered and are not proposed to be pursued. • Risk analysis seeks to mitigate against any failure to achieve agreed objectives.
<p>Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appropriate Consultation and Complaints mechanisms to help ensure that it remains aware of evolving priorities amongst local residents. The feedback can and will inform the Council Plan, Work Plans and the Council’s Financial Planning.
<p>Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s Individual and Work Plan Monitoring Performance Framework establishes key timescales, which reflect statutory and best practice requirements where appropriate. • The Councils maintains a Policy and Procedure Review Schedule. • The Councils operates a Governance and Financial Schedule to ensure key timescales reflect statutory and best practice deadlines.
<p>Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Consultation Strategies are established which require and promote effective engagement with stakeholders.

Determining Interventions	Position at PTC
Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership and Risk arrangements are reviewed considered and monitored.
Ensuring arrangements are flexible that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Performance Management framework ensures services are provided within the context of a regular review, so that adaptations can be made to evolving and changing circumstances. • The Council will consider outsourcing where it is appropriate, efficient and effective to do so. • Decisions regarding service delivery are informed by the Council's procurement strategy.
Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appropriate staffing structures in place to maintain the review of and reporting on service quality and performance management. • The Council sets standards and targets for performance in the delivery of services on a sustainable basis. • Targets for performance are set annually by the Town Clerk and Council.
Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the financial plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Plan is aligned to the Council Plan Work Plans to ensure that committee budgets are adequate to deliver agreed service levels.
Informing medium and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's operates based on a 5-year planning period.

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	Position at PTC
Ensuring the financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial planning processes are effectively integrated helping facilitate joined up service and resource planning.
Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, considers the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appropriately qualified and experienced officers in both service and finance functions to ensure that decisions are taken with regard to robust information over the medium and long terms where appropriate.
Ensuring the medium-term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a financial strategy and plan, which takes account of the short, medium and long terms.
Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Plans and the Procurement Strategy give appropriate weight to social value. • The Council will seek to apply the principles of the Public Services (Social Value) Act, 2012 in commissioning and procuring services.

10. Performance management

Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local authority must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time so that there will be a continuous need to develop capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual Members of staff. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

Outcome

The Council regularly reviews its management of performance, which is validated by both the internal and external auditor reports. The Council has sufficient capacity to carry out its functions, objectives and priorities and consequently reviews its resources.

Developing the entity's capacity	Position at PTC
Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council reviews its committee Work Plans on an annual basis. • Routine retrospective monitoring of Work Plans takes place and is reported to the relevant committees. • The Council has an up to date Asset Register and Business Continuity Risk Assessment/Plan
Improving resource use through the appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council encourages inward investment and alternative income streams for the Council. • The Council will regularly review the effective management of resources as it acquires assets and seek ways to reduce any running costs that were originally determined by any predecessor body whilst retaining an effective service delivery.
Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will enter into and participate in partnerships whenever appropriate to secure cost efficiencies, collaborative working, and effective service delivery or to protect the quality of services.
Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a staffing establishment, which is reviewed on a regular basis. • The Town Clerk and the application of relevant policies ensure that the workforce is effectively managed.

Developing the entity's capacity	Position at PTC
Developing protocols to ensure that elected Members and appointed role holders and officers communicate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the working relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings are held between the Council's Chair, Deputy Chair and the Town Clerk. • Roles and Responsibilities are defined in the Council's Scheme of Delegation and in Job Descriptions. • The Member and Officer Relations Policy clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a Scheme of Delegation, which reflects recognised good practice and the authority's needs and requirements. The scheme clearly identifies the decisions which are and to whom they are delegated.
Ensuring the Chair and the Town Clerk have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Town Clerk has the operational lead in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by Members strategically and each provides a check and a balance for the other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and Responsibilities are defined in the Council's Scheme of Delegation and in the individual Job Descriptions. • A formal appraisal of the Town Clerk is conducted by the Chair and officer colleagues provide a 360 appraisal of the Town Clerk's performance.

Developing the entity's capacity	Position at PTC
<p>Developing the capabilities of Members and officers to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by: – ensuring Members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged – ensuring Members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis – ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is outward looking and participates in appropriate local, regional and national meetings/events. • Locally it has effective partnership working/ discussions across both public and private sector. • Members and Officers attend appropriate awareness/training events ensuring that the Council is up to date concerning legislative changes and general practices. • The Council provides a standard induction process for all new Members and staff, while at a committee level induction is required and provided to cover any service specific induction issues. • The staff appraisal process identifies training needs, and develops a plan to deliver those needs, which is monitored on an ongoing basis. • The person specification for each role ensures that only suitable and appropriately qualified individuals are appointed. • Corporate awareness is provided to staff by means of meetings, team briefings and other appropriate mechanisms. • Members have the option of participating and are encouraged to participate in a training needs survey which identifies individual needs. • A range of corporate training/awareness/development activities are undertaken on an ongoing basis overseen by the Town Clerk. • Officers are encouraged to attend local and national training events to develop and enhance their skills, knowledge and attitude by networking with their peers and experts from other Councils. • Staff are supported in undertaking the training and development they need to help them achieve and maintain high levels of performance, and to achieve their full personal potential. • All officers maintain a Continuous Professional Development Log and are set the target of achieving at least 12 points per calendar year. All officers to date have annually exceeded this target and have provided significant qualitative value to the Council beyond their job description responsibilities.

Developing the entity's capacity	Position at PTC
Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council employs a series of strategies to encourage public participation. Public participation is available at every Council and Committee meeting. • The Council continues to develop its services to customers through effective consultation, communication and establishment of clear service standards. • The Council's website and related printed material set out the opportunities for local people seeking to participate in activities or issues.
Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring Members are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Clerk is responsible for overseeing the delivery of Council services and is held to account by the Council. • Alongside internal challenge there is a wider public challenge through the media, complaints, public engagement and feedback from partner organisations.
Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews, which take account of training or development needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is committed to providing excellent services that deliver high standards. Learning is an essential part of the development of the Town Council as a professionally run organisation and good employer. • It is the policy of Penrith Town Council to implement a meaningful and effective annual appraisal system, which monitors performance against agreed realistic targets and responsibilities, providing an opportunity for each member of staff to have their performance reviewed. • Appraisal interviews discuss and agree objectives for the coming period as well as reviewing performance to date and cover all activities and responsibilities identified in individual job descriptions, individual action plans from previous appraisals and committee work plans. • The Town Clerk carries out staff appraisals. The Chair undertakes the appraisal of the Town Clerk. Officers of the Council provide a 360-degree performance review of the Town Clerk. • All appraisals and appraisal interviews follow the adopted Town Council appraisal system and remain strictly confidential. • Training needs are identified and planned during the appraisal.

Developing the entity's capacity	Position at PTC
<p>Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council aims to provide an effective and efficient service in a safe, stimulating and comfortable working environment affording job satisfaction to all employees. • The Council has a range of policies to promote employee wellbeing as part of maintaining a productive workforce. • The Council encourages a positive work life balance and provides flexible working. • Procedural documents are in place for all operations undertaken by officers and all members of staff are issued with contracts of employment, job descriptions and duties. • All staff are employed under nationally agreed terms, and receive annual appraisals. • The working environment for both staff and Councillors contributes to job satisfaction and positive output. • Training is arranged around the requirements of the Council, the Business Plan and the needs of the individual. • A training budget is available in each financial year to allow required training to take place. • A range of training providers are used in addition to in-house training. • The Council has a suite of personnel policies that are in place to retain and support staff; staff handbook, recruitment and retention policy, appraisal policy, capability procedures policy, bullying and harassment policy, office and member protocol, grievance and disciplinary arrangements, health and safety policy, hearings policy and a whistleblowing policy.

11. Risk management & internal control

Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are in place as a key part of accountable decision-making, policymaking and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

Outcome

The Council has sound financial management, processes and structures in place with internal controls that are substantial and robust which are verified by the Internal and External Auditor.

Managing Risk	Position at PTC
Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has in place a Risk Management Policy, supported by regular reporting, which support a culture of effective risk management including appropriate consideration of risk in decision-making.
Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's arrangements cover operational risks. • Regular reporting together with Internal Audit and External Audits are designed to ensure and demonstrate effective arrangements are in place. • Internal Controls are reviewed annually.
Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific officer, the Services and Contracts Manager is responsible for assessing and managing risks.

Managing Performance	Position at PTC
Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a performance management system including service and financial targets, which are monitored on a regular basis. • Where organisational change arises work plans, performance targets and financial provision are amended accordingly to ensure that organisational change delivers against the identified benefits.
Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a robust and diligent reporting system, which requires that all reports cover relevant issues including any risk, legal and financial implications.
Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which provides constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council and Members carry out the function of scrutiny of the Council's activities and services as a whole. • The effective engagement of Members and Officers of the Council help ensure that reports, analysis and recommendations are supported by robust evidence, data and critical appraisal.
Providing Members and officers with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Performance Management Framework covering Committee Performance, Employee Performance Finance and Risk generates formal reports, which are considered by the responsible committees.
Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appropriate reporting arrangements in place, which are reviewed by Internal and External Audit.

Robust internal control	Position at PTC
Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Management Strategy is supported by an Internal Audit Plan and working arrangements.
Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Management Strategy is subject to regular updates and is reported on at least an annual basis. • The Council ensures that Internal Control arrangements are monitored and amended in the light of changed systems or issues being highlighted. • The strategy and the internal control arrangements are subject to independent review and assurance from Internal Audit.
Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has up to date policies and arrangements in place to minimise the risk and impact of fraud. • These are reviewed by Internal Audit and reported to the Finance Committee on a regular basis.
Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appointed an internal auditor who is independent of the Council and works to an agreed audit plan. • The Council has received two internal audits each fiscal year and has been found to be operating well and fully compliant with professional and statutory standards.
Ensuring an audit function, which is independent and accountable to the Council provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appointed an internal but independent auditor to exercise the audit function • The Council reviews its effectiveness on an annual basis to ensure that it is operating in line with its remit for best practice as set out in CIPFA guidance.

Managing data	Position at PTC
Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appointed a Data Protection Officer. • The Council has initiated accreditation to IASME, which is appointed as an Accreditation Body for assessing and certifying against the Government's Cyber Essentials Scheme. • The Council has in place robust and comprehensive data protection policies and arrangements including effective reporting of breaches. • Staff are appropriately trained in data protection issues, • The monitoring and review of the Council's data protection practices takes place regularly through the data protection officer.
Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where data is shared with other authorities, it is subject to appropriate formal data sharing / processing arrangements.
Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data is reviewed regularly. • Independent assurance is provided by Internal Audit as part of the Audit Plan, and the Council's IT Contractor.

<p>Strong public financial management</p>	<p>Position at PTC</p>
<p>Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has appointed a Responsible Finance Officer who has extensive experience as a statutory local government officer regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 ii. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 iii. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 iv. The Local Audit and Accountability Act, 2014 v. The current Accounts and Audit Regulations • The Council has robust financial management arrangements covering financial planning, budget monitoring, project appraisal and financial reporting. • The arrangements have ensured that the Council has continued to deliver a balanced budget and have been subject to independent review by internal audit and external audit. • The Council has continued to receive a positive assessment of its Statement of Accounts from external audit.
<p>Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s financial management arrangements continue to receive positive assessments from Internal Audit, whilst financial risks are reported as part of the budget development and monitoring process.

12. Transparency and accountability

Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

Outcome

The Council delivers good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability, which are verified by unqualified auditor reports and the Quality LCAS standard.

Implementing good practice in transparency	Position at PTC
Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council makes all reports available on the website and in paper format upon request. • Officers seek to ensure that all reports are comprehensive and understandable to the reader. • The Council is compliant with the Transparency Code.
Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council provides the full range of information, statements and reports, which are required by statute, or recognised good practice. • Local residents can request access to further information as recorded in the Council’s Scheme of Publication.
Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council produces Annual Accounts and an Annual Report, which supplement the range of information provided during the course of the year.
Ensuring Members and officers own the results reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members at Full Council consider all reports on performance and relevant resolutions are considered and adopted.

Implementing good practice in transparency	Position at PTC
Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the annual governance statement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The position on the framework will be reported to Finance Committee prior to the submission of the Annual report and the annual governance statement and in conjunction with the year-end internal audit report.

Implementing good practices in reporting	Position at PTC
Ensuring that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Performance Management Framework and governance principles will be applied to all organisations with which the Council has a significant involvement or partnership working arrangements.
Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council follows best practice guidance, which helps ensure that the format and information is readily comparable against that of other organisations.

Assurance and effective accountability	Position at PTC
Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date the Council has not received an action plan from the external auditor. • In the event of the Council receiving a qualified audit report and a requirement to develop an action plan, this would be reported to the Finance Committee and Full Council, to secure a resolution. Council would agree an appropriate plan, which would become a standing item on the Finance Committee Agenda and Full Council agenda until successful completion.
Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to Members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Finance Committee assesses the effectiveness of internal audit on an annual basis.
Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council considers the outcome of all external audits.
Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council monitors the risks on delivering services by way of third parties, including such risks within service plans/contract agreements. • Managerial arrangements with partnerships are risk based, and with those, where the risk of service disruption is minimal monitoring is of necessity 'light touch' with reliance placed upon the partner organisations' governance arrangements.
Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council only enters into partnerships where the partner organisations share the Council's ethos and has appropriate governance arrangements in place to ensure accountability.

