

Agenda Item No: 7

Report To: **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Date: **30 June 2016**

Report Title: **2015/2016 Annual Governance Statement**

Report Author: Nicholas Clayton, Policy and Performance Officer



Summary:

Each year the Council must produce and approve an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). AGS are designed to summarise for members residents, and external stakeholders the Council's approach to governance and show how the Council fulfils the principles for good corporate governance in the public sector. The AGS needs to draw conclusions, based on evidence throughout the past year, about the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements.

The AGS must be published alongside the Council's formal audited financial statements, though need not be agreed at the same time. The full financial statement and the auditor's findings and proposed opinion will be considered by the committee in September. It is after that when the AGS is published along with the accounts.

This year's AGS builds on previous statements, providing updated information where needed.

Our governance arrangements are well-developed and pervade all that we do in a variety of forms, but they also evolve. Their various components are subject to ongoing development, with principal developments summarised in the AGS.

In conclusion governance arrangements remain appropriate, effective and adaptive to change as circumstances dictate.

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: None in particular

Recommendations: **The Audit Committee is asked to consider the draft 2015/2016 Annual Governance Statement and approve this to be signed by the Leader and Chief Executive as required by regulations.**

Policy Overview: Good standards of corporate governance are essential in all

organisations. The Council's arrangements are longstanding, well-developed and continue to be effective, but adaptive to change in local circumstances. The Council updated its Local Code of Corporate Governance during 2014, building upon the best practice framework of CIPFA and SOLACE. Our governance arrangements are generally regarded as strong and more so for the direction set by the Cabinet's adopted corporate business plan and associated frameworks and policies.

Financial Implications:

None

Equalities Impact Assessment

Not applicable for this report

Other Material Implications:

None

Background Papers:

None

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2015/2016 Annual Governance Statement

Leader's introduction

This year continues our new style of Annual Governance Statement which, I am pleased to say, continues to be well received. I hope that it will lead to a greater understanding of local government and the way it works.

This Statement outlines the context of, and the relationship between, leadership and good governance.

I am pleased to say that Ashford's ambitious plans are beginning to come to fruition, with great strides being made on a new Ashford College, Commercial Quarter, an exciting development at Elwick Road and planning permission to double the size of the Designer Outlet – to name just a few. None of these exciting initiatives would be possible without robust processes and governance. By regularly reviewing and monitoring progress of our initiatives, we ensure that both private and public resources are put to best use in their delivery.

The May 2015 election not only saw an intake of new Members, but also a refreshed Cabinet team. Alongside continuing the programme of lead members providing continuity and wider inclusivity within the Council, we have produced a single practical guide - 'A Framework' - which introduces all Councillors to the fundamental structures, services and governance of the organisation. This helped Councillors to quickly settle in to their role representing Ashford Borough and the Council.

In December the Council also agreed a new Corporate Plan – an ambitious document which sets out this authority's vision for the next five years, to build upon the momentum already seen in our strategic projects to achieve even more.

It is crucial that governance does not stand still but instead evolves with our developing organisational requirements. The broad range of developments highlighted within this report demonstrate that this council maintains a strong focus on good governance to match its drive towards entrepreneurship, self-sufficiency and excellent outcomes for the Ashford borough.

Councillor Gerry Clarkson
Leader of the Council

Scope of responsibility

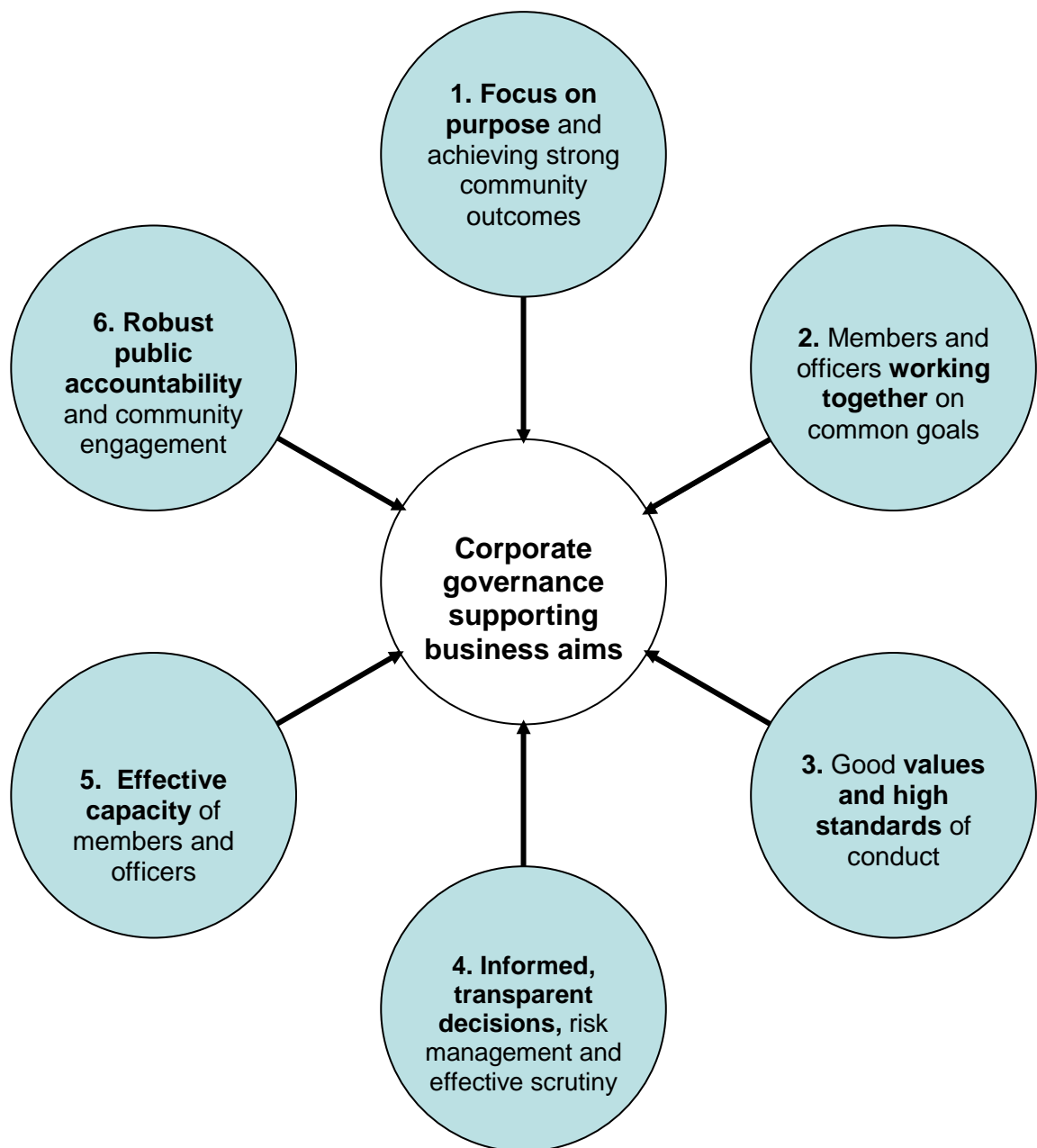
1. Ashford Borough Council is responsible for ensuring its decisions and business are conducted according to the law and proper standards. Furthermore, the Council must ensure public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and that all resources are applied efficiently and effectively so the Council gains best value for its residents and taxpayers.
2. Associated with this responsibility is the need for good governance. In 2014 the Council adopted an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance, which followed principles contained in national guidance and produced by CIPFA and SOLACE.
3. In summary terms this Statement explains the Council's governance arrangements, how they have directed decisions and services over the past year, and how the Council has sought assurance that its arrangements remain effective.
4. As governance arrangements must be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose there are changes to arrangements this Statement also reports.
5. Practical progress towards achieving the Council's priorities is made by the delivery of key projects, and an important development during 2014 was the set-up of the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board. The Board's remit is to ensure the effective and timely delivery of key projects and is a multi-agency group whose membership includes ABC and KCC Members, Ashford's MP and other key partners. Board agendas, minutes and the project programme are submitted to Cabinet and are made available on the Council's web site.

Purpose of our governance framework

6. Governance is a permanent but evolving feature of the Council's work. It is designed to ensure members' and officers' roles in decision-making on policies and other matters are fair and transparent. Further the framework helps to ensure the Council's business complies with relevant laws and regulations, and is directed by a clear focus on achieving important issues, including identifying and managing risks.
7. Governance is more than just a set of rules, and comprises:
 - The leadership and cultural values, systems and constitutional processes by which the Council's work is directed and controlled
 - The ways through which the Council engages with, leads and accounts to citizens individually and its community collectively.
8. Our governance therefore helps the Council to understand progress and make comparison with others. It serves also to reduce exposure to material risks and protect the Council when problems do occur.

9. As a public body transparency is crucial. Good governance inspires public confidence. It provides the basis for public assurance that Council decisions are taken for the right reasons, that quality of service is protected as far as is reasonable, and that public money is wisely and effectively spent. In these times of tight resources and uncertain economic conditions, risks are more obvious. Our governance helps to focus on key controls and those risks considered more critical to achieving the Council's strategic goals.

Our six core principles for good corporate governance



Principle 1 – Focus on purpose and achieving strong community outcomes

“[We] should seek to engender an ambitious attitude...associated with quality housing growth coupled with real economic activity”¹

10. For the first half of the year, the *Focus 2013/15* Corporate Business Plan provided the strategic direction for the organisation.
11. Focus 2013/15 was reported to, and approved by, Cabinet as part of the budget report in October 2013, and took stock of the organisation's achievements to date and identified a number of refocused priorities (underpinned by strategic projects).
12. Following the May 2015 election, a new corporate plan was required. Accordingly, the Cabinet agreed a new Corporate Plan In December - *“The Five Year Corporate Plan – for Aspiration, Action and Achievement”*. This sets out what the councils aims to achieve in the following priority areas –
 - *Enterprising Ashford* – economic growth & investment
 - *Living Ashford* – quality housing and homes for all
 - *Active & Creative Ashford* – healthy choices through physical, cultural & leisure engagement
 - *Attractive Ashford* – countryside & townscape, tourism & heritage
13. This is publicly available from the Council's website and was also subject to regular scrutiny through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
14. For staff, various internal communications are used to promote awareness of the organisation's overarching priorities, including the on-line monthly staff magazine, Root and Branch, and the Chief Executive's periodic 'walk about' briefings.
15. The second of the council's revamped Annual Reports was published in July 2015, with the intention to continue to update and publish the report soon after the end of each financial year. The report further communicates the Council's aims and progress to residents and key stakeholders, summarises the Council's achievements throughout the year.
16. The Ashford Strategic Delivery Board ensures effective and timely delivery of key projects. Continued progress towards key actions is monitored by the Strategic Co-ordination Team whose membership comprises high level officers from all stakeholder organisations. Quarterly updates are reported on progress towards key actions and a traffic light system is used to highlight areas of concern.
17. In September Cabinet endorsed an Ashford Borough Council / Kent County Council Delivery Deal. This deal offers a short, clear statement of the two

¹ *“The AshFORd Model: A blueprint for integrated growth”*, p.3

councils' shared commitment to work together to deliver the council's key priorities and better quality outcomes – including the 'Big 8' projects and future service improvements.

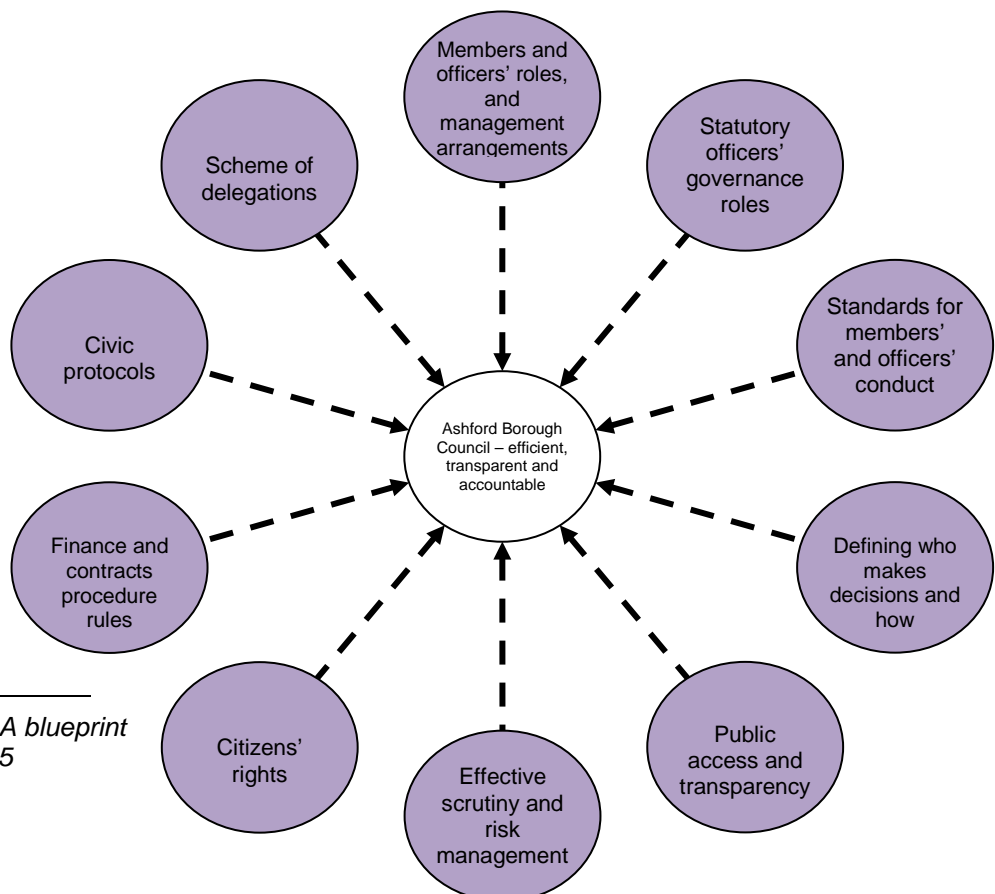
18. In November 2015 Cabinet approved a revised Housing Revenue Account business plan to 2045. This report provided an update on the financial position of the HRA and financial model forecasts for the next 30 years. The business plan continues to be robust and viable, and able to deliver its key priorities.
19. Following Full Council endorsement of the new corporate plan, the Council's senior leadership agreed that a refreshed, regularly updated, visual and interactive online performance system would help senior managers, members and (in time) the general public get an up-to-date picture of strategic performance. As part of the Council's wider governance arrangements, such performance information is used to reflect on the organisation's approach and check outcomes against corporate plan initiatives
20. Accordingly, over the last six months the Policy and Performance team have worked with a leading open data and visualisation company to design a *Performance Dashboard*, held workshops with performance leads within services to see what information the Council collects and what should or could be collected; gathered contextual data from KCC and other partners; and kept senior managers appraised of developments.
21. The Performance Dashboard uses data and insights from across the authority to monitor progress against the goals set out in the new Corporate Plan. Whilst this approach is naturally an evolving one, the aim is for the Performance Dashboard to inform the work of both officers and members, providing an ongoing tool which facilitates insight and understanding across the organisation on the state of progress against our goals.
22. Whilst the contents, targets and presentation of the Dashboard are currently being finalised, it will begin to be incorporated into the council's quarterly performance monitoring regime from the Quarter 1 2016/17 reporting cycle.
23. In January 2016 the council recruited to a new post of Programme Manager. This role will support key projects and programmes across the authority, providing a range of support including project management, monitoring, understanding of project risk and ad hoc advice to those colleagues leading on individual projects.
24. Since being in post the Programme Manager has been working in conjunction with the Management Team to construct the programme of projects that focus on targeting our available financial resources and capacity to deliver the council's aspirations as set out in the Corporate Plan. A new project management toolkit is in place to ensure a consistent approach is taken across the organisation.

Principle 2 – Members and officers working together on common goals

“Ashford Borough Council has a pro-growth culture, which is driven from the very top – with a vision shared by politicians and officers alike.”²

25. As a statutory body the Council’s structures for decision-making, its rules and its processes are influenced by legislation and associated regulatory needs. A fundamental part of our governance, therefore, is our Constitution. An important aim of the Constitution is to reinforce the principle of members and officers working together, and in partnership with others, to achieve common goals.
26. The Constitution is a legal requirement and sets out how the Council runs, how it should make decisions and the guidance it should follow to ensure these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are needed by law, while others were chosen by the Council.
27. It has several chapters, which set out the basic rules governing the Council’s business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are set out in accompanying rules and protocols.
28. Parts of the Constitution are periodically reviewed by a committee to ensure the Council’s arrangements remain relevant. Thus changes are made as necessary to ensure our arrangements support effective performance of our responsibilities to residents and taxpayers, whilst fully supporting effective achievement of the Council’s aims.

The Constitution’s principal features



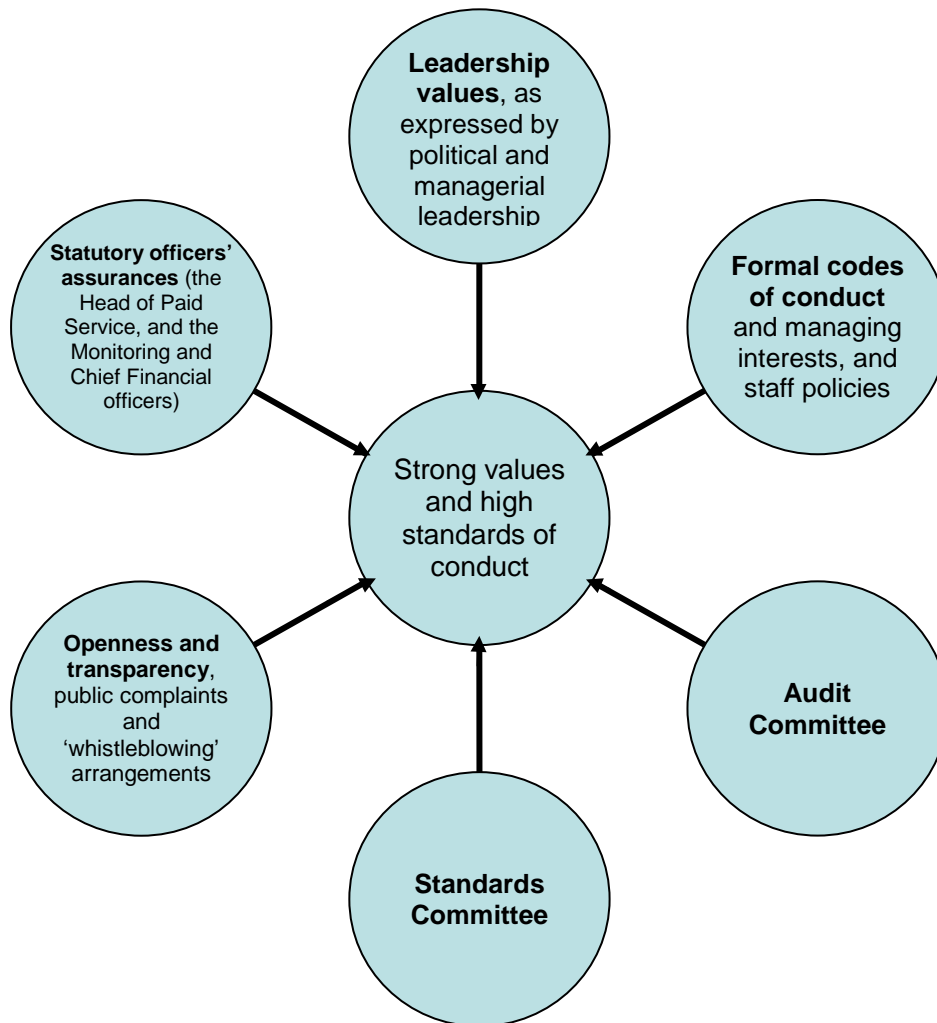
² *“The AshFORD Model: A blueprint for integrated growth”, p.5*

29. The most effective way to deliver efficient and cost effective services is for officers and members to work together with our partners to agree and achieve a common goal. A number of working groups comprising officers and members have met during the year to steer and monitor progress of high profile projects and service delivery. All working groups have clear objectives which are set out in a terms of reference.
30. The Trading Enterprise Board (A sub-committee of Cabinet) and the Ashford Strategic Delivery Board are good examples of the Council's intention for members and officers to work collaboratively to deliver strategic priorities.
31. A new Cabinet reporting process, introduced in 2014 to underpin the principle above, continues to provide greater involvement for Portfolio Holders and discussion with officers in the production of cabinet reports.

Principle 3 – Good values and high standards of conduct

“Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership.”³

32. Aside from the Constitution, the Council promotes strong values and expectations of high standards in a variety of ways. The Code of Conduct for members is subject to on-going review and declarations of pecuniary interest for all members have been made available on the Council’s website. Aside from these the Council enforces the management of its expectations through various channels. The principal components are set out in the following diagram.



³ *The principles of public life*, in “What to expect as an Ashford Borough Council Councillor”, A Framework – Document for elected members, p.9

33. By example, recent changes in national policy, most notably the introduction of the Care Act 2014 prompted a review of the council's existing safeguarding policy. Accordingly, in March the Cabinet endorsed a revised corporate Safeguarding Policy.
34. The policy has been brought up to date to align with changes in national policy, best practice from around the county and across the council, local working arrangements with the relevant statutory partners and following a recent internal audit of the council's safeguarding arrangements.
35. The purpose of this policy - and its associated procedures - is to protect and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk using or receiving services provided or commissioned by Ashford Borough Council.
36. To respond to the particular challenge of introducing new councillors quickly and effectively into the governance framework, the Council produced 'A Framework – Documents for elected members' to coincide with the May 2015 elections. This document provided an introduction, and comprehensive overview, of how the Council operates - to help new members assimilate quickly into their role as councillors – helping them to understand the standards required of them (whilst serving as a useful guide to others). This was followed by a period of intensive Member induction.
37. In October 2015 Cabinet endorsed a new approach which aims to strengthen quality monitoring of new development in order to drive up standards of new homes built and the outside environment around them.
38. In June the council's Management Team received the fifth yearly report detailing the complaints received by the organisation, covering the 2015 calendar year. This analysis was broken down by both the three stages of the complaints process, and by the service areas responsible. Overall, the last year has seen a 13% decrease in the total number of complaints received, compared to 2014 – and fewer complainants felt it necessary to escalate complaints to Stage 2 or the Ombudsman.
39. In June 2016 the Audit Committee will receive an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance, based upon the recently-refreshed CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework. This new Local Code positions the attainment of sustainable economic, societal, and environmental outcomes as a key focus of governance processes and structures, and provides the overarching structure for future Annual Governance Statements.

Principle 4 – informed and transparent decisions, risk management, and effective scrutiny

“with our pragmatic approach to risk, we are now taking advantage of borrowing to attract house building, commercial growth and inward investment.”⁴

40. The Full Council is the ultimate place for decision-making, particularly on new policy and the annual budget, but many other decisions by law are for the Cabinet to take. Our arrangements are all covered by the Constitution.
41. In May 2015 the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee agreed a proposal to reduce the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 16 Members to 12 Members. It is hoped that this change will enable the Committee to operate more akin to the Government Select Committee arrangements when undertaking their scrutiny role.
42. All member decisions across the formal and democratic decision-making process are published under statutory requirements. There is a presumption that information and decisions are taken in public, but occasionally (under access to information regulations) some information is regarded as ‘exempt’ and not published. However, the Council aims as far as is possible to keep this type of information and decision to the minimum.
43. The Council has continued its commitment to transparency and meeting relevant legislative requirements. Wherever possible, information is made readily available to the public through the ‘transparency’ section of the Council’s website. The Council is responding to incorporate fully the requirements of the Transparency Code 2015, further increasing the breadth and depth of information provided to the public on the services provided by the authority.
44. Our approach to risk management at the strategic level is solid, with a focus on exploring ways of making it more effective. In the light of the council’s adoption of a new corporate plan, and ongoing work to develop its supporting delivery plan, the council’s overarching risk management framework was revised over the last year. In September the Audit Committee approved this new approach to how the council identifies and manages risk, and received a revised set of thematic strategic risks in March.
45. Programme and Service risks are also currently being revised, and remain routinely considered by the management team (with the highest of these risks also included in the Strategic Risk Register to members).
46. A revised procurement strategy is now in place and a corporate procurement role is now embedded. To complement this, new Contract

⁴ “The AshFORd Model: A blueprint for integrated growth”, p.3

Procedure Rules and procurement guidance were adopted in early September which seek to encourage more local interest in procurement.

47. The developing role of Trading Companies and alternative business arrangements requires robust governance structures to match. In December the Audit Committee received a report setting out the governance arrangements that have been put in place for the council's companies, outlining the relationships and structures that have been put in place to manage the council's interfaces with its companies. The report discussed the appointment of external auditors for the companies and the mechanics of the loan agreement that has been established with the property company.
48. In September 2015 the Audit Committee agreed to a new regime for weak and poor assurance reporting relating to the work of its internal auditors. Members had made clear their wish to gain earlier engagement with audit reports that conclude an area has only 'weak' or 'poor' controls. These new arrangements aim to allow Members a timely understanding of the key issues raised, and proposals to address weaknesses to give assurance that significant matters identified by audit are appropriately addressed by the council's management.

Principle 5 – effective capacity of members and officers

“It is important we have skilled officers and members...in disciplines across the Council.”⁵

49. The Council is committed to identifying and fulfilling the learning and development needs of members and officers. As community leaders, it is vital that our councillors are supported to be as effective as possible. Members’ training needs are considered through a Member Training Panel. These needs are recognised as an important issue to develop and the issue is recognised as one of our strategic risks. Focusing on this is particularly important given the changes in external influences (the results of economic factors and government policies) and the breadth and complexity of some issues facing the Council and its members. A number of training and briefing sessions have been delivered during the year and these are detailed in a report to Cabinet each year by the Member Training Panel.
50. Following the May 2015 election there has been a re-organisation of Portfolio Holder responsibilities and duties to more closely align them to the organisational structure of the Council, clarifying their remit whilst strengthening the organisational understanding of their role in relation to good governance. Lead Members also continue to provide continuity and wider inclusivity alongside each Portfolio.
51. As the council embraces new ways of working and online service delivery, it is important that not only staff but members have the appropriate tools to fulfil their functions within the governance framework. That is why in July the Cabinet approved a revised package of IT provision for Members, aimed at improving the consistency of the scheme as well as increasing the accessibility of IT.
52. The new scheme is designed to address a number of issues that have arisen, namely that –
 - a. Any IT provision should enable members to work from home, at council premises or elsewhere, with few limitations
 - b. Any solution should provide full interoperability with standard Microsoft office applications
 - c. Access to Ashford Borough Council email, calendars and intranet based applications should be provided, where appropriate and where allowed without violating information security
53. This year has also seen the continuation of forward planning sessions for Cabinet members. Facilitated by senior managers, these sessions keep members informed and updated on current strategic issues in order to develop their capacity and effectiveness in informing the strategic direction

⁵ “The AshFORd Model: A blueprint for integrated growth”, p.5

of the authority. Regular written Leader's briefings on relevant strategic issues and topics of interest given to all members aim to inform them about important and interesting matters happening in the Borough. These briefings have been widened to include distribution to key external stakeholders, including Parish Council and Urban Forum representatives.

54. For staff the past year has again seen a particular focus on leadership and management development, as part of our ongoing workforce development programme. We are as a Council committed to good standards of staff development, and our supporting policies and processes have helped maintain high standards of professionalism in our staff.
55. In October 2015, as part of the Corporate Plan suite of reports, Members approved the direction of travel for the long-term management structure of the council that acknowledged, and planned for, a series of senior management changes. The strategy built on the successful approach to succession planning that has been adopted across the council in recent years. The structure was designed to support members in achieving the corporate plan objectives, building on the progress made in the past 5 years.
56. Subsequently, and in light of the resignation of the Chief Executive, The decision was taken that the Corporate Director (Operations) be seconded into the Interim Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service role for the period of up to two years, retaining responsibility for the services currently allocated in the structure plus Property and Projects. This post holder was identified because of her already largely externally facing role and her ability to make that step without compromising existing service delivery.
57. An Electoral Review of Ashford commenced in January 2016 with the aim of reviewing electoral arrangements for the whole Borough. The review includes looking at the total number of members to be elected to the Council (Council size), the number and boundaries of electoral wards, the number of councillors for each ward, and the names of each ward.
58. The initial stage of an Electoral Review aimed to identify and confirm the preferred Council size. This is the number of elected councillors who will serve on the Borough Council, and the council's submission to the Boundary Commission was approved by Full Council in April 2016.

Principle 6 – robust public accountability and community engagement

“Engagement with our residents and businesses must be genuine, really listening to the hopes – and the fears – of our public .”⁶

59. Consultation and engagement with residents and communities on a number of issues and projects continues in a number of ways, including:
- The Local Plan to 2030 - An extensive ‘Plan it’ consultation exercise to inform the emerging local plan. Subsequently, a range of local events were arranged to exhibit the proposed sites that had been put forward for inclusion in the draft Plan through the ‘call for sites’ process. This provided local residents with a chance to comment on individual site options at an early stage and to inform officers of the local context. Further events were held in several locations to discuss remaining ‘shortlisted’ site options once the initial sieve of site submissions had taken place. A considerable range of consultation has also taken place in the context of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan in both the completed studies and those still emerging. This has involved local organisations, professional bodies, statutory consultees, infrastructure providers, developer interests as well as residents and parish / local councils where appropriate.
 - Chilmington Green development – since the planning application was approved, and subject to the necessary s106 agreement, ongoing community engagement is being conducted on the proposals and will extend through the lifetime of the project.
 - Repton Community Development – extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement in order to inform the external ‘feel’, materials and artwork associated with the community facility. This included a consultation to name the new building.
 - Quarterly parish forums, of which urban community forums are full members.
 - Recycling materials – engagement with residents in early 2016 as part of the Kent-wide “Recycle Now” awareness campaign, launched by the Kent Resource Partnership. This sought to build upon Ashford’s improved recycling figures with a targeted campaign focussing on metal and plastic items.
60. The Annual Report introduced in 2014 provides a user friendly and easy to read document which ensures residents, partners and stakeholders are informed of achievements made by the Council and its key partners during the year, progress against the Councils key priorities and the projects underpinning them. A financial summary is also included.
61. As noted above, the Council’s transparency arrangements have also been strengthened – in line with new government requirements.

⁶ *“The AshFORd Model: A blueprint for integrated growth”, p.5*

Is the framework effective?

How we receive assurances

62. Each year the Council has responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The principal components on which the review relies are summarised in the diagram below, with inputs occurring over the course of the year. Comments about each component are set out below.



Members/The Leader	During the course of the year the Cabinet, the Selection and Constitutional Review Committee and other committees at various times made appropriate decisions to evolve our governance arrangements.
Management	Management team has particularly maintained an organisational focus on implementing the business plan and budget, and both have proceeded well and effectively. This has been achieved whilst ensuring effective capacity, adjusted where necessary. Staff policies have been reviewed and adjusted to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and a very effective senior leadership programme has been implemented.

<p>External Audit</p>	<p>A positive assurance to the Council was received through the auditor's 2014-2015 Annual Audit Letter presented in December 2015.</p> <p>The letter gave an unqualified opinion on the accounts, an unqualified opinion in respect of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and an unqualified opinion on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts submission</p>
<p>Internal Audit</p>	<p>A professional, independent and objective internal audit service is one of the key elements of good governance, as recognised throughout the UK public sector. Internal Audit is also a requirement of the Accounts & Audit Regulations which ask that audit's work leads to an opinion on the overall effectiveness of the governance framework, including arrangements for risk management and internal control.</p> <p>Our internal audit service, provided through the Mid Kent partnership was assessed in April 2015 by the Institute of Internal Auditors as being fully confirming with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Mid Kent Audit is the first audit team in the country to be so assessed by the Institute. The service continues to fully conform with Standards as stated in its Annual Report.</p> <p>The Head of Audit Partnership provided his 2015/16 interim report to the Audit Committee in December 2015, with a full report received in June 2016. The report includes an audit opinion concluding that the system of internal control at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2015 accords with proper practice. This assurance extends to both the financial and non-financial systems of the Council insofar as they have been subject to audit review.</p> <p>Regarding the Council's governance arrangements and risk management, the Head of Audit Partnership's opinion concludes that the corporate governance framework complies in all significant respects with the best practice guidance on corporate governance issued by CIPFA/SOLACE.</p>
<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>The Committee carried out a full programme of review work. Its work, summarised in the committee's Annual Report to the Full Council, notes that since June 2015 items considered by the main O&S Committee have included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABC Business Plan quarterly performance report • Sickness absence figures and information for 2015/16

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report of the Housing Framework 2013-2018 • Quality Bus Partnership • Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 • Emergency Planning Response to Oak Tree Road Gas Explosion and lessons learned in response • International House – Report on Full Years Trading • Disabled Adaptions to Council Homes • Review of Changes Made to the Mayoralty following the O&S Review in 2010 • Presentations from Southern Water and Southeast Water • Medium Term Financial Plan • Flood Prevention on ABC Land • Community Safety Partnership update • The Council's draft 2016/17 budget
Audit Committee	<p>The Committee completed a full programme during 2015/16, the details of which are contained within the Audit Committee Annual Report. This included reports on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of Independent Audit Review of the Council's Affordable Housing Programme (June 2015) • Strategic Risk Management (September 2015) • Safeguarding (December 2015) • Reporting for ABC Companies (December 2015) • Data Protection (March 2016)
Statutory Officers	<p>Both the Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal and Democratic Services) and the Chief Financial Officer – Section 151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive) report they consider their respective statutory responsibilities for providing assurance are well-supported by appropriate capacity and organisational arrangements. In particular, the Council is satisfied that its arrangements for the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) allow the role to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) 2010 Statement on the role of the CFO in local government.</p>

Areas of significant governance for review

63. Following on from the above, the following areas of review are highlighted:

- a) Embedding the council's new *Performance Dashboard* into the quarterly performance monitoring regime.
- b) Completion of work to revise the council's strategic risk management procedures.

Conclusion

64. This full Statement has taken account of the CIPFA/SOLACE 'proper practice' statutory guidance (Delivering Good Governance in Local Government) and has set out a summary of the Council's governance framework and directly addressed the issue of its effectiveness. Generally these arrangements work well for the Council and allow it to uphold good standards of accountability and effectiveness.

Cllr Gerry Clarkson
Leader of the Council

Tracey Kerly
Chief Executive