Delivering Good Governance in Local Government
Review of the CIPFA/SOLACE 6 Underlying Principles

1. **Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.**

The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision.	• The Council's new **Corporate Plan** 2008/2011 has been implemented over the last twelve months. Specific targets are set for each year. These targets and aims were reaffirmed as part of the budget process for 2009/10 • **Local Area Agreements** are in place. National Indicators agreed. Local Strategic Partnerships continues to actively manage these targets locally. • **Performance Management** arrangements are in place and regular reporting through Corporate Services scrutiny • The Cabinet has agreed **Business Plans** for all of Council's services. • The Council's **Employee Development Reviews** convert the Corporate aims into personal targets	• Chief Executive • Directors	• Continue to promote the Council's strategic focus amongst staff and engender staff buy-in of the golden thread concept. • Ensure that new business plans for the reduced number of services convert the vision into • Ensure that Employee Development Reviews are maintained for all staff

The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its impact on the authority's governance arrangements.	• Annual **Partnership Report** undertaken to ensure that all partners remain focused on the Council's aims and priorities • All proposals to the Cabinet require all relevant legal and financial and risk implications to be assessed	• Director of Community and Partnerships	• Continue to develop closer and joined-up working with parishes and community groups through the Community Forums.

• Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties.	• Annual **Partnership Report** undertaken to ensure that all partners remain focused on the Council's aims and priorities
	• The Council is represented on a number of local partnerships to ensure that there are strong links between the valued work of partners and the Council's objectives, examples include:
	  o Oldington and Foley Park Pathfinder
	  o Local Strategic Partnership
	  o Stourport Sports Club
	  o Wyre Forest Community Housing Group
		• Directors	• On-going responsibility to produce an annual Partnership report
			• On-going representation on local forums and groups.

• Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.	• The Council publishes the **Best Value Performance Plan** to detail the work of the Council and how targets and achievements have been met. • The Council also publishes the	• Chief Executive • Director of Resources • Director of Community	• Continue to develop the content of Best Value Performance Plan and the Financial Statements.

The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
	Financial Statements in line with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (Amended) 2006. • In addition management reports are presented and published through the Cabinet and Corporate Services Scrutiny on both financial and performance information	and Partnerships	
• Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available.	• Customer Satisfaction Index consultation on a 2-yearly basis. • Customer/Citizens' Panel. • National Satisfaction Surveys. • Specific survey work and consultation. • Our performance is measured against top quartile performance of other LA's. • Monitoring undertaken of Corporate Strategy, LAA outcomes and performance management. • Monitoring of service and financial plans. • CMT regularly review the results of Consultation exercises and how they have been used to influence future policy	• All Directors	• The Council needs to continue using customer and community evidence as intelligence to inform effective decision-making. • Staff survey to be undertaken during 2009/10.

The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery.	• Overview of service performance by Directors directly accountable to them and also to Cabinet Members. • Cabinet takes oversight of performance • Effective Scrutiny arrangements are in place through the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee. • Risk management registers – both operational and strategic. • Complaints system and learning from examples. • Business Continuity Plans. • Constructive dialogue with the Local Government Ombudsman.	• Directors • Cabinet Members • Corporate Services Scrutiny	• Implementation of Performance Clinics during 2009/10
• Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	• Preparation and co-operation with the Audit Commission in relation to the Annual Value for Money Assessment. The Council is judged to be "adequate", in both approach and performance. • Environmental Impacts considered for changes in policy considered by the Council. • Full training on Environmental Awareness provided to all staff	• Director of Resources	• Development of revised approach to Value for Money to be considered and implemented during 2009/10.

2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance	Responsibility	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice. • Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and senior officers.	• Fully developed Constitution which is kept under review to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. • Record of decisions and supporting materials.	• Monitoring Officer	• On-going training and development for Members
• Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required.	• Constitution. • Scheme of Delegations. • Individual decisions by Cabinet Members in consultation with Management Team	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.
• Make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management.	• The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for all operational matters and is designated in the constitution as the Head of Paid Service. • Chief Executive oversees the performance management	• Chief Executive	• No additional action is necessary.

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance	Responsibility	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
	framework through the Employee Development Reviews linking appraisal targets to the overall objectives of the Council.		
• Develop protocols to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.	• Protocol currently in place.	• Chief Executive	• No action required
• Make a senior officer (the S151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.	• Director of Resources responsible to ensure that adequate financial arrangements are in place. • Regular reporting of Financial Reports • Annual Statement of Accounts. • Use of Resources statement identifies potential.	• Director of Resources	• Improve quality of forecasting as part of reporting.
• Make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.	• Constitution. • Oversight of key Council and Cabinet reports. • Attendance at Council and Cabinet. • Review of and contribution to all Management Team reports.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.
• Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.	• Member/officer protocol.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.
• Set out the terms and conditions for	• Member remuneration is reviewed as	• Chief	• No additional action is

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remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable). • Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery.	required by an independent panel. This is published within the Constitution and on the Council's website. • Single status and pay evaluation process. • Performance reporting against the Corporate Strategy and performance/improvement plan. • Complaints Procedure. • Appraisal targets.	Executive •	necessary.
• Ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.	• The Corporate Plan has been developed in line with feedback from the Community and in line with the Community Strategy • The Council uses a prioritization model to ensure that the budget process provides resources for the key council services • Budget consultation exercise is undertaken annual to assist in the allocation of resources.	• Director of Resources	• On-going responsibility as detailed.
• When working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the	• Clear rules in place through the Council's Partnership Policy. The Council's performance in this area is reviewed annually and presented to Cabinet	• Director of Community and Partnerships	• On-going responsibility as detailed. .

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authority.
• When working in partnership:
   o Ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership.
   o Ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.			

3.   **Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour**

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect.	• Clear arrangements in place to foster openness. • Regular meeting of the Officer Communication Group are used to communicate and consult • Key Messages produced after meetings of Corporate Management Team • Authorities values approved within the Corporate Plan	• Chief Executive • Directors	• No additional action is necessary.

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behavior expected of members and staff, and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols.	• Members'/officers' code of conduct. • Disciplinary procedure. • Employee Development Review process • Complaints procedures. • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy. • Member/officer Protocols. • Dignity at Work Policy. • The Council maintains the Ethics and Standards Committee to oversee this area	• Monitoring Officer	• New employee and member induction process and on-going training.
• Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	• Clear arrangements in place for the Declaration of Interest • Standing orders in relation to Contracts regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. • Codes of conduct. • Equality and Diversity Scheme. • Whistle-blowing procedure.	• Monitoring Officer	• New employee and member induction process and on-going training.
• Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners.	• The Council's values are adopted and are contained within the Corporate Plan.	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• No additional action is necessary.
• Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are	• The Council's Ethics and Standards Committee Codes of Conduct.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.	• Contract Standing Orders. • Equality and Diversity Scheme. • The Council's EDR process		
• Develop and maintain an effective standards committee.	• Terms of reference. • Compliance with monitoring conditions set by the SBE. • Forward planning programme. • Training of committee members.	• Monitoring Officer	• Support with on-going training.
• Use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority.	• The decision making process is detailed within the constitution and provide opportunity for the Council's values to be considered during the process.	• Chief Executive	• No additional action is necessary.
• In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behavior both individually and collectively.	• Considered within the Partnership Annual Report.	• Directors	• No additional action is necessary.

4.   Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance:	Responsibility:	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.	• Three Scrutiny Committees are maintained which have clear areas of responsibility, • The Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee monitors the performance of the Council against the Corporate Plan • Review groups analyse specific areas and contribute to the development of policy complement the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. • 'Non-Executive' committees undertake scrutiny work in other areas, such as the Audit Committee. •	• Monitoring Officer	• Support the development of Scrutiny activity through on-going training and development.
• Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.	• Minutes of meetings and notices of decision provide the required level of documentary evidence to support effective decision making.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.
• Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put	• Clear arrangements are in place for the declaration of interest • Members' Code of Conduct.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.

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in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	• Employee Code of Conduct. • Monitoring Officer present at Cabinet and Council meetings to give advice. • Annual monitoring by Ethics and Standards Committee.		
• Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee.	• The Council has appointed an Audit Committee in accordance with CIPFA guidance. • Its terms of reference are detailed within the Council's Constitution.	• Director of Resources	• Training for Audit Committee members
• Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.	• The Council has a complaints procedure in place • All Ombudsman complaints classified as a local settlement are reviewed by the Ethics and Standards Committee. • Response times to all Ombudsman complaints are reviewed by the Standards and Ethics Committee.	• Chief Executive	• No additional action is necessary.
• Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and	• The Council has a set structure for the provision of information contained within report. This ensures that consistent and relevant information is provided.	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• No additional action is necessary.

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their implications.	• Specific sections are included in relation to legal, financial and risk. • Strategic and Cabinet reports are reviewed by Management Team and all but routine reports are reviewed by Directors. • There is an emphasis on evidence-based decision making and always using up-to-date statistical information, where available.		
• Ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately.	• A summary of legal and financial advice is contained within the 'Implications' part of all reports submitted before decision-takers. • Legal and financial advice is provided at meetings where appropriate.	• Monitoring Officer • Director of Resources	• No additional action is necessary.
• Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs.	• The Council has and maintains a Risk Management Strategy • The strategic Risk Register which is regularly reviewed by the Audit Committee, CMT and Risk Management Group • Operational risk logs are maintained in directorates and these are used for service planning.	• Director of Resources	• No additional action is necessary.
• Ensure that arrangements are in place for whistle-blowing to which	• The Council has a whistle-blowing policy, which is well publicised.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.

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staff and all those contracting with the authority have access.			
• Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity places on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities.	• The Council's Monitoring Officer and the Legal Team review all reports going forward for consideration and provide advice to officers and Members. This extends to supporting officers in establishing the full extent of available powers.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.
• Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law.	• Legislation (statute and secondary legislation). • Directors are required to have understanding of the law as it relates to their particular service areas.	• Monitoring Officer	• No additional action is necessary.
• Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into their procedures and decision-making processes.	• This role is undertaken by the Council's Monitoring Officer.	• Monitoring Officer	• No further action is necessary.

5.   Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance	Responsibility	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.	• Induction programme in place for new Members and Officers • Specific training provided in areas such as Planning and Audit. • Update courses as required and identified through the EDR process. • Adequate training budgets provided for the Council	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• Training and Development Programmes kept under review.
• Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority.	• Statutory Officers sit on the Council's Corporate Management Team and have direct access to Council • Statutory officers hold the necessary qualifications and are registered for Continuing Professional Development • External Skills bought in as and when required to supplement internal skills	• Statutory Officers	• No further action is necessary.
• Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively.	• This is reviewed through the Employee Development Review process.	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• All training and development is kept under review.
• Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including	• Training for officers is identified in their Personal Development Plans	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• No further action is necessary.

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the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed.	and is linked to appraisals.
	• Several courses in particular areas are available to members which include:
	  ○ Speaking in Public
	  ○ Dealing with Constituents queries
	  ○ Local Government Finance
	  ○ Ethical Conduct for Members		

• Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of The Cabinet as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs.	• Member Training and Development Programme.	• Monitoring Officer	• All training and development is kept under review.
• Ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority.	• Parish liaison meetings. • The Council actively communicates and consults with residents on key issues • Public involvement is encouraged at meetings of the Cabinet	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• Further work required to evidence that all sections of the Community are engaged.
• Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development.	• Succession planning considered by the Directors and Service Managers • Full implementation of the EDR appraisal scheme.	• Chief Executive	• No further action is necessary.

6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

The local code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:	Source documents/good practice/other means that may be used to demonstrate compliance	Responsibility	Area for Improvement/Further Action:
• Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what. • Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required.	• The Council has an approved Sustainable Community Strategy. • Wyre Forest Matters is the vehicle to ensure that all institutional stakeholders are engaged with the Council's priorities	• Corporate Mgmt Team	• Continue to participate with the Wyre Forest Matters Local Strategic Partnership.
• Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function.	• The Scrutiny Committees produce an annual report of activity.	• Monitoring Officer	• No further action is necessary.
• Ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively. • Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality. • Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community	• This is achieved through the Community Strategy and meetings of Local Strategic Partnership Groups, Wyre Forest Matters. • The Council undertakes consultation which is review by the Corporate Management Team • Reports are reviewed by the Monitoring Officer where there is a doubt about exemption of information. • The Council only exempts the specific confidential information (and not the whole report) wherever possible.	• Monitoring Officer	• The Council needs to consider the implementation of the White Paper in relation to the Stronger Communities.

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have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.			
• Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	• This is included within the Council's Consultation Strategy	• Chief Executive	• Implement Stronger Communities Action Plan.
• On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period.	• The Council continues to publish the Best Value Performance Plan • The Council also monitors and reports the performance against the Corporate Plan	• Chief Executive	• No further action is necessary.
• Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific	• Constitution. • Website publication of key policies and decisions.. • All confidential reports are approved as such by the Monitoring Officer or another solicitor. • All Freedom of Information Appeals are considered by the Ethics and Standards Committee.	• Monitoring Officer	• Continue to reinforce and demonstrate our commitment.

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circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.	• The Council maintains a Publication Scheme for information • Forward Plan		
• Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.	• The Council holds monthly meetings with Trade Union representatives and further meetings as required on specific issues	• Chief Executive	• No further action required.