
Annual Governance Statement

2014-15

1. Scope of Responsibility

- Barnet Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- In discharging this overall responsibility the council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions including the management of risk.
- Barnet Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework delivering Good Governance in Local Government. This statement explains how the council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4[2] of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006 in relation to the publication of a statement of internal control.
- There has been a review of the Code of Corporate Governance in the last financial year 2014-15 and no changes were proposed. The Code of Corporate Governance is included within the Constitution.

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2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- The governance framework encompasses the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the council directed and controlled together with the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level - it cannot eliminate all risk only provide reasonable not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- The system is based on an on-going process designed to (i) identify and prioritise the risks to achievement of the council's policies, aims and objectives, (ii) evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised together with the impact should they be realised, and (iii) manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- The governance framework has been in place within Barnet London Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

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Assurance Cycle



What are we seeking to receive assurances on?

- Delivery against the corporate plan whilst observing the governance framework
- Management of the Council's key risks
- Design and effectiveness of internal controls
- Compliance with laws, regulation, internal policies and procedures
- Key governance tools are fit for purpose, e.g. the performance management and risk management framework
- Value for money
- Direction of travel of previous governance issues
- Effectiveness of the system of governance

What sources of assurance do we require?

- Internal Audit Annual Plan
- CAFT Annual Plan
- External Audit Annual Plan
- Ofsted and Care Quality Commission
- Other external agencies
- Management assurances from active compliance frameworks
- Committees/internal boards responsible for monitoring and reviewing the systems, processes and documentation
- The theme committees are responsible for monitoring and reviewing process and documentation

How we will arrange ourselves to receive adequate assurances?

- Officer and Member structures working together
- Commissioning Directors working closely with Theme Committee Chairmen and the Lead Opposition spokesperson
- Decision-making bodies
- Bi-monthly Assurance meetings
- Performance and Contract Management Committee
- Audit Committee
- Board Assurance: Partnership/Enabling/Delivery Boards
- Group Leaders Panel
- Constitution Ethics and Probity Committee

How we know that we are effective?

- Review sources of assurance identified at the planning phase
- Review annual reports that provide further insight such as: audit committee annual report, Quarterly Budget and Performance Monitoring
- Ensure sources of assurances have delivered against their plans at the necessary quality
- Internal and external audit annual reports/letters
- Highlight areas of weakness, development and implement action plans.

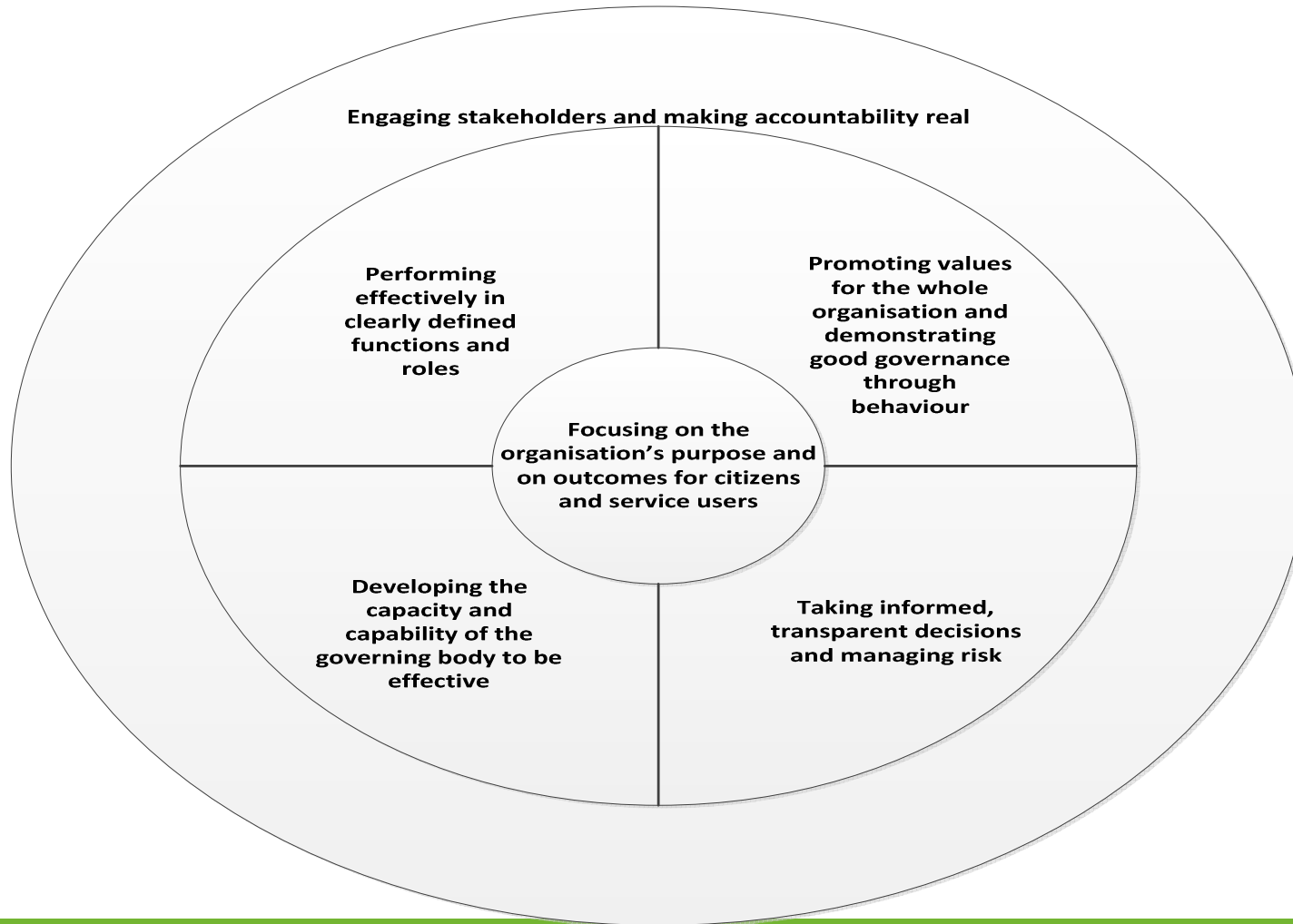
Code of Corporate Governance

Annual Governance Statement

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3. The Governance Framework

- The council's governance environment is consistent with the six core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework, within each principle we have identified the sources of assurance.



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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members working with officers have developed a clear vision of their purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and services user. • The Corporate Plan approved by full Council, is a corporate narrative that sets out the council's vision for the next five years. • Informed by Barnet's Priorities and Spending Review, it sets out the council's priorities and strategic objectives for Barnet as a local authority and Barnet as a place; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life ➢ where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure ➢ where responsibility is shared, fairly ➢ where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer • The Plan confirms the council's commitment to cooperative commissioning by working with local, regional and national partners to deliver the plan. • A new committee system of Governance was approved by full Council on 2 June 2014. The new system acknowledges and reflects that in the present day more decisions are now made at partnership level and many services are contracted out, jointly commissioned or procured and delivered in innovative ways. • In place are seven themed committees that have commissioning responsibilities across some wide cross-cutting themes. Linked to each committee is a Commissioning Plan that sets out its strategic priorities and commissioning intentions for the next five years. • The priorities and intended outcomes have been communicated to citizens, services users, partners and stakeholders in a number of ways; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ the council's website ➢ a new look Barnet First directly tying into the corporate narrative; ➢ a variety of social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published Corporate Plan to 2020 Corporate Plan 2015-20 • Published Commissioning Plans

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area (continued)</p> <p>Measuring the quality of services for users, making sure they are;</p> <p>(i) delivered in accordance with the Council's objectives</p> <p>(ii) represent the best use of resources, value for money and</p> <p>(iii) ensure the effective management of change and transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrangement of the new committee system enables it to contribute to the effective and efficient management of the council and allows Members to review the progress and performance of services provided to the community • The council's priorities, outcomes and services are reviewed annually as part of the business planning cycle. • We use different performance measures to give an overview of the council's performance and highlight areas of improvement. • Management agreements are now all in place. • Progress against the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan is reported and reviewed quarterly by Performance and Contract Management Committee, included is the delivery performance of major contracts, performance of delivery units and the budget position. The committee scrutinises performance against key performance indicators and financial targets. • Understanding performance in Barnet - in place are seven key principles of performance management which reflect that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ services are commissioned ➢ there is greater focus on outcomes ➢ we set clear accountability for performance ➢ we focus on analysis led improvement, not just data reporting ➢ the right information is made available to the right audience; and ➢ we manage by exception to address key challenges. • The council has in place a Transformation Programme to deliver the key changes, complex projects, and key savings required by the Corporate Plan – its purpose is to reduce the council's cost by increasing efficiency and to make sure that we are best able to meet the needs of citizens and services users, now and in the future. • In place is our Customer Care Charter where we state there is a '<i>..need to be clear about the services we can and can't provide; sometimes other organisations will be better placed to meet your needs</i>' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's Performance Framework clearly sets out how we manage, monitor and work with services – the framework is reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and continues to reflect the council's priorities. • Performance and Contract Management Committee – has overall responsibility for monitoring the council's quarterly budget position, including monitoring the trading position and financial strategy of Council Delivery Units and Support Groups: Customer Support Group; Re; the Barnet Group Ltd. • Quarterly Budget Performance Monitoring – by Performance and Contract Management Committee, includes the Transformation Programme. • Published Customer Care Charter • Internal Audit and Anti Fraud Strategy & Annual Plan and Risk Management Approach 2014-15 – supports the delivery of council's key objectives by providing an auditor judgement on the effectiveness of the management of the risks associated with delivery of the council's services.

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimate strategic direction and control lies with elected Members who collectively are responsible for the governance of the Council. • The council's constitution provides a summary and explanation of how the council operates. It documents the terms of references for Committees and the appropriate point of authority for decisions, rules of procedure and various codes and protocols, including a protocol for working arrangements between officers and Members. Further documented is a scheme of delegated authority to officers. As such the constitution augments the statutory framework in setting out the council's decision making powers. • The constitution sets out the responsibilities of both Members and Chief Officers - in particular it identifies the seven statutory posts as follows; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive works with Members and the Strategic Commissioning Board to deliver the council themes) ➢ Monitoring Officer – Assurance Director ➢ Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) - Chief Operating Officer ➢ Deputy Section 151 Officer – Deputy Chief Operating Officer ➢ Director of Children's Services - Commissioning Director, Children and Young People ➢ Director for Adult Social Services – Commissioning Director, Adults and Health ➢ Director of Public Health – Public Health Commissioner • As head of paid service the Chief Executive, along with Commissioning and Delivery Unit Director's works closely with elected Members to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ strategic direction – ensuring all staff understand and adhere to the strategic aims of the organisation and follow the directions set by Members. ➢ policy advice – act as principal policy advisers to members to lead the development of work strategies to deliver set by Members ➢ partnerships – leading and developing strong partnerships to achieve improved outcomes and better public services for citizens and service users. ➢ operational management – overseeing financial and performance management, risk management, people management and change management within the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following are included in the council's constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Protocols for Member/officer relations are set out in the constitution ➢ Functions delegated to committee ➢ Functions of authority delegated to officers ➢ Who the Chief Officers are and functions of the Statutory Officers • Member representative roles, outside bodies appointments and opportunity for members' engagement in the community • A programme of monthly briefings with; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Leader ➢ Deputy Leader ➢ Committee Chairman ➢ Strategic Commissioning Board ➢ Commissioning Directors • Meetings between Commissioning Directors and committee lead opposition spokesperson • Chief Executive annual appraisal process, conducted by the Leader of the Council

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operation officer (Chief Finance Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1927) has responsibility for ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ appropriate advice is given on all financial matters ➢ keeping proper financial records and accounts ➢ maintaining an effective system of control ➢ lawfulness and financial decision making ➢ providing advice on financial impropriety, budget and policy framework issues to elected Members. • The Monitoring Officer responsibilities set out in the constitution include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ making sure agreed procedures are followed ➢ all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with ➢ receiving and acting on complaints that a member has breached Barnet Members code of conduct ➢ advising councillors on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions ➢ contributing to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct through provision of support to the Group Leaders Panel and by maintaining a Register of Interests of Councillors and voting co-opted members of the Council • Restructure of the Commissioning Group approved by the General Functions Committee – the statutory roles of Director for Adult Social Services and Director of Children Services previously sat within the Delivery Units. Following a restructure they are now within Commissioning Group • The Head of Internal Audit gives an objective and evidence based opinion on all aspects of governance, risk management and internal control, and reports quarterly to the Audit Committee. • A new system of governance provides greater scope for Commissioning and Delivery Unit Directors to work closely with theme committee chairmen and the lead opposition spokesperson to develop feed into and develop committee work plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting through the Performance contract and Management Committee. • The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council are the appointed Council representative Directors of the Joint Venture Company (JVCO) with Capita Symonds Limited and Holding Company (NEWCO). • Development of the Corporate Plan: Members and officer working together in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders.

Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions no longer delegated to and made Cabinet Members - this means that instead they either taken by cross party committee or delegated to the appropriate Commissioning Director as set out in their scheme of delegation. • Performance challenge sessions – these involves Commissioning and Delivery Unit Directors meeting on one-to-one basis with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Contract Management Committee. • Member role profiles (approved by General Functions Committee) set out the duties and responsibilities of (i) a Committee Chairman and (ii) a Councillor – these are published on the website. • There is an annual process to review and agree the Pay Policy in accordance with the Localism Act section 38 (1); the Remuneration Committee remit is to review senior management pay, set a pay policy and appoint senior management (Chief Officers). <i>As of May 2015 these function will be carried out by the General Functions Committee and Chief Officer Appointments Panel following the decommissioning of the Remuneration Committee.</i> • The General Functions Committee continues to be in place whose remit it is to review conditions of service, as per its remit • The strategic objectives approved by elected Members are linked to all services and feed into service/team plans and individual objectives. Aligning personal objectives to strategic objectives enables managers to help staff understand the contribution they are making to the corporate objectives and how their roles fits into the work of the council a whole. 	

Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding standards of conduct and behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council recognises that good governance is underpinned by shared values demonstrated in the behaviours of its Members, staff and partners. • The codes of conduct and protocols set out in the constitution document the expected standard of conduct and personal behaviour of Members and staff. • In place is a Group Leaders Panel that investigates and determines alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members . Also appointed to the panel is an Independent person who has a statutory role of giving view on any complaint about the conduct of a Member. • Managers are responsible for embedding assurance frameworks to monitor compliance with policies and procedures, where relevant consistent with expectations of statutory inspectors. • Arrangements are in place to make sure that Members and employees are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interests in dealing with different stakeholders. • Contained with the Employee Handbook are relevant polices from the Counter Fraud Framework Manual 2014, which sets out the council's Whistleblowing Policy Statement and Procedure and the Fraud Policy Statement and Procedure. • The Assurance Director is the Monitoring Officer and is responsible for making sure that decisions are made not only in accordance with the constitution but are within the appropriate legal framework • Promoting our standards outside the organisation is our customer care charter which says we want to be an organisation that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ friendly, fair, patient and professional at all times ➢ listening, sympathetic and human ➢ easy to reach and do business with ➢ accurate and clear about what we can and can't deliver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of conduct and personal behaviour communicated a number of ways including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Codes of conduct for Member's and officers set out in the Constitution. ➢ Register of interests for both Members/officers with guidance ➢ Declaration of gifts and hospitality with guidance ➢ 'Our Stars' staff award is a scheme that recognise outstanding practice and those who go the extra mile for the good of our community. It further seeks encourage employees to contribute to new ideas and innovate. • Published Corporate Complaints Policy • Published guidance on complaints about (i) the conduct of a councillor, and (ii) council services. • Cumulative Equalities Impact Analysis for 2015/16 published as part of the budget proposals and proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2020 '<i>...all residents from our diverse communities benefit from the opportunities of growth and to ensure that the decisions taken do not disproportionately impact on people who may experience disadvantage. This includes groups with protected characteristics across the borough.</i>'

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding standards of conduct and behaviour (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) set out in the constitution, provide the governance structure within which the council may procure works, supplies and services. • The Performance Management Framework helps individuals understand how they contribute to the strategic goals of the organisation and ensure that the right skills and efforts are focussed on the things that really matter being what will make an impact on organisational performance. • Commissioning Directors have ultimate responsibility for making sure that decisions are made properly and in line with the Scheme of Delegation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Procedure rules apply to all those who commission and or procure contracts on behalf of the council, including external consultants or third party service providers • Functions of the Monitoring Officer are set out in the Constitution • All the council's identified statutory officers are on the Assurance Strategic Commission Board. • Half –yearly and annual performance reviews. • The whistleblowing policy aims to encourage staff and others to feel confident in raising serious concerns by providing clear avenues through which those concerns can be raised and reassuring staff who raise concerns that they will not be victimised if they have a reasonable belief and the disclosure was made in good faith. • The counter-fraud guidance is designed to assist in both the detection and reporting of fraud. • The council has a well established three stage corporate complaints process.

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision making framework and scheme of delegated authority to officers are contained within the constitution and reviewed regularly. They make sure the committee and decision making processes are open, transparent and free from bias and conflict of interests. Senior officers (including the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring officer) support Members in the policy and decision making process by providing assessments and advice. The implementation of decisions is made in a manner that promotes the council's vision and values. Committee work programme – this is programme listing the decisions that will be made during the municipal year either by the committee or full Council. Further detailed in the document is the intended date of decision, a is brief description of the decision requested and the lead officer. Under the new committee system the Performance and Contract Management Committee provide a crucial scrutiny role. The committee can; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make referrals to the relevant commissioning theme committee requesting further information or a more detailed commissioning review, if there is a particular area/aspect of concern over service performance against the Corporate Plan. receive and scrutinise contract variations and change requests in respect of external delivery units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of reports, decisions and committee procedure rules set out in the constitution. Monthly publication of theme committee work programmes Scrutiny and reporting on performance via the Performance and Contract Monitoring Committee Audit Committee Annual report which is ratified by Full Council . Annual review of the Risk Management Framework. Maintenance and monitoring of the Corporate Risk Register.

our social with our local police, social care and health standards

2. increase the number of children who were placed for adoption within 12 months of being placed for adoption to 75%

3. reduce the number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second subsequent time to 12%

in 2011/12 to support early intervention

How we will achieve this objective

Early identification, accurate needs assessment and effective interventions key in supporting and empowering families to ensure that all children have the best possible start.

To achieve this we will:

- implement the Family Focus programme to work with one hundred

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are e subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions previously made under Cabinet Member delegation are now instead considered by theme Committee – providing improved levels of scrutiny work through agenda focused, cross party Committee member. • The new governance system has accorded Full Council a higher level of authority and democratic decision making responsibilities. • The council’s risk management process is fully integrated into service areas and major projects. It uses a proven risk management system to record risks on a central register and manages and monitors both risks that are threats and opportunities. Internal Audit review the quality of operational risk registers as part of their annual work plan and management can use the information to update the risk profile for their areas of responsibility. • The risk management framework is reviewed and refreshed annually, approved by the Audit Committee and published on the Council’s website. Regular reporting of strategic, major operational and major project risks takes place on a quarterly basis and is reported to the Performance and Contract Management Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication on the council’s website of the Corporate Performance Indicators • Legal , financial, governance, risk and equalities sections identified in Delegated and Committee reports. This contributes to Members being better informed prior to deciding on policy and decision making. This also raises the awareness and increases Member and officer understanding of risk and the risk management process. • Internal Audit continue to review and report on Risk Management arrangements and provide a statement on the adequacy of risk management arrangements across the council.

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cases where users of services report that they feel

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4. increase the percentage of children

in 2011/12 to support early inter

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are e subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council seeks to identify, assess and respond to all strategic risks that may affect the achievement of the corporate plan outcomes, adopting a response based on the nature of the risk. Risks may be tolerated where there are sufficient assurances that they have been properly identified, assessed and will be appropriately managed, and that the potential benefits accruing to the community justify that level of risk. • Directors and Heads of Service are ultimately responsible for managing risks within their own services. • The council's arrangements for providing economy, efficiency and effectiveness are reviewed by the external auditors on an annual basis. Their annual audit letter provides a summary of the activity undertaken during the year. • The Audit Committee provides independent assurance of the adequacy of the internal control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process. Appointed to the Committee are two independent members. • The Assurance Assistant Director is the Lead officer supporting the Audit Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External audit annual letter

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>5. Developing the capacity of Members and officers to be effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Development sessions are held to brief Members on relevant areas of legislation on key areas and issues covering areas such as planning, safeguarding, growth and regeneration, new contracts, etc. • The Management Academy is for approximately 200 of the council's managers. Its aim is to provide a range of learning and development solutions, and to build on managers current skills, knowledge and behaviour. • Leadership Programme • The Council's value set has been incorporated within the Council's Leadership Framework and forms the basis of individual performance reviews. • The Localism Act redefined the Member standards regime and Full Council in May 2012 accepted changes to the Constitution to reflect the new requirements. A Group Leaders Panel was formed during to consider complaints against the Member Code of Conduct. This met four times during 2013-14. • New committee systems means that ALL members are given the opportunity to be involved in decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member training and development . • Establishment of the Management Academy and Leadership Programme. • Individual staff learning and development plans. • Annual Staff Survey helps the organisation understand where possible changes can be made.

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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>6. Engaging with local people and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council is committed to engaging and consulting with citizens about its services. A range of tools for effective engagement are used including: online surveys 'Engage Barnet', involving residents through face to face events, and empowering residents to help provide services themselves. • A consultation hub 'Engage Barnet' is available on the web where we publish all our consultations activities, this also includes a section on 'We Asked, You Said, We Did' feeding back the results of consultations. Barnet First also includes a page in each issue reporting on live consultations and the outcome of recent surveys. • We have an on-going dialogue between community and voluntary organisations via CommUnity Barnet being the umbrella organisation for community and voluntary groups in Barnet. The council has a Citizens' Panel, which is statistically representative of the population of Barnet, and provides an opportunity for residents participate on how they feel about issues. The Panel acts a sounding-board for future policies and service decisions. • This year the council consulted widely on i the combined package of the Corporate Plan; Commissioning Priorities; and budget to 2020. using a series of consultative workshops and an online survey. • The website was re-launched in April 2012 and assists encouraging public engagement with the council and the decision making process. More recently 'My Voice' was added to the front page of the council's website which serves as a central place where residents can find out how to get involved in council engagement mechanisms. • Adopt a Place is a new initiative launched this year, and is another way in which residents can interact with the council, The scheme enables community groups to maintain a local feature, a green space, or a whole street, by the council providing them with support, materials, and tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Account of Adult Social Care in Barnet 2013 • Business Planning Consultation 2015-19/20 Findings



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Principle	Description of Governance Mechanisms	Assurances received
<p>6. Engaging with local people and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Resident's Perception Survey (a survey with over 2000 residents from across the borough) is currently conducted twice a year to help inform our new performance management system more regularly. • The outcome and results of all consultations are published on the website and Barnet First. • Last year the council updated its 2010 Consultation and Engagement Strategy which commits to publishing a Consultation Forward Plan and an Annual Report. Public Participation and Engagement rules are included within the constitution guiding public participation at council meetings. • The Communities Together Network was approved in November 2013 and includes a wide range of community organisation. It puts in place arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to (i) engage with (ii) contribute to (iii) participate, in the work of the council to encourage community cohesion and foster good relations between Barnet's diverse communities. The group meets three times a year and is co-chaired by the local authority and a community representative. It reports into, by exception, the Community Safety Board. • There is process for Corporate complaints as well as Children's and Adults Statutory complaints. Complaints are monitored through the Customer Service work group and the Customer and Information Management Board and reported on quarterly at Assurance SCB. In all formal investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman, the council was found to have acted fairly and followed procedure. • There is also a process for publishing customer feedback online with council responses to the comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation Forward Plan and Annual Report (Draft) • Draft Equalities Policy and 'Communities Together' Action Plan • Annual Resident Perception survey • Communities Together annual report Adults and Communities Delivery Unit Annual Complaints Report



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4. Review of Effectiveness

- The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of senior officers of the Council who have responsibility for the governance environment, the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report, any comments made by the council's external auditors and any other review agencies and inspectorates..
- Internal Audit has concluded overall, based on the findings of work undertaken at London Borough of Barnet that satisfactory assurance can be given on the systems of internal control in place, with satisfactory assurance also provided on the fundamental financial systems in place within the Council.
- The Council is able to confirm that its financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010). In addition, the authority's assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirement of the CIPFA Statement on the role of the Head of Internal Audit.
- We consider the arrangements in place to continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.
- A number of areas were identified in the preceding Annual Governance Statement, for which an update has also been included detailing on our progress to improve governance regarding those issues. Where issues have not been sufficiently progressed they have been included within our governance issues for 2015-16.

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Governance Issues – progress during 2014-15

The table below describes the governance issues identified during this review period 2013-14 and the progress made against these during 2014-15.

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update on position	Carry forward for 2015-16
<p><u>Business Continuity and Resilience:</u></p> <p>Although the Council now has a Business Continuity Project underway the overarching Council Business Continuity Strategy is not yet in place. The CSG (formerly NSCSO) contract has been in place since September 2013 and the contract was designed to improve business continuity arrangements, however the planned changes to information systems will be gradual and therefore Business Continuity remains a significant risk for the Council.</p>	Head of Information Management	The council now has Business Continuity Strategy which introduces a corporate approach to business continuity. The Business Continuity Management Team (BCMT) meets quarterly to monitor the organisations BC arrangements and identify new risks or a change in the risk profile as appropriate. Additionally the standard incident reporting procedure around incidents ensures that lessons learnt are captured and acted upon. If a significant risk arises it is escalated via CIMB for appropriate action.	No
<p><u>Embedding New Committee System:</u></p> <p>The new committee system went live on 2 June 2014 and work will continue to ensure forward planning mechanisms are effective so that committees consider issues in a timely fashion. Effective working relationships are required between the Chairman, committee members and officers supporting the committee. The committee system was designed so that Members are able to become involved in the decision making to their satisfaction. It is acknowledged that the Terms of reference of each committee and the revised constitution will take some time to bed in and become operationally effective and efficient. Work is underway to review the implementation process.</p>	Head of Governance	<p>Prior to the implementation of the committees system, Directors and Lead Commissioners worked with the Governance Service to develop planned programmes of committee work for the 2014/15 municipal year. Work programmes were added to and refined throughout the municipal year to reflect new items of business and amendments to reflect changing circumstances. Systems of briefing meetings with both of the main political groups were established, enabling the development of working relationships. Cross-party committees have been agreeing the majority of business which falls within their remits.</p> <p>A committee system project is scheduled to take place during 2015 to review the operation of the system and refine as appropriate.</p>	Yes

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Governance Issues – progress during 2014-15 (continued)

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update on Position	Carry forward for 2015-16
<p><u>Roles and Responsibilities for the Commissioning Council</u></p> <p>For 2014-15 there will need to be a continued focus on the effectiveness of the organisation in commissioning against outcomes. To achieve this, clarity of roles across commissioning and delivery is vital. In respect of governance, roles and responsibilities across commissioning and delivery will be reviewed to ensure the effectiveness of the commissioning process in both terms of how it supports the setting of outcomes and how this translates into successful delivery. As a consequence of this the structure that supports the Commissioning model will be considered.</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Commissioning</p>	<p>In September 2014 the Chief Executive consulted on a new structure for the Strategic Commissioning Board and the senior tier within the Commissioning Group to create more commissioning capacity and to provide for a more integrated commissioning approach across the council and with its local partners.</p> <p>The requirement to further strengthen the commissioning functions resulted in new Commissioning Portfolios being created, led by four Commissioning Directors. The purpose of the Commissioning Director role is to provide clear accountability, capacity and subject matter expertise for the delivery of outcomes in line with Member priorities and in conjunction with partners and stakeholders. The council adopted the Commissioning Director arrangements in January. With the Strategic Commissioning Board, the senior tier within the Commissioning Group structure agreed; a process was put in place to ensure suitable support to Commissioning Directors to deliver the Commissioning Plans set by Members through theme committees. The new structure went live on 1 April 2015. In terms of governance and supporting the setting of outcomes and how this translates into successful delivery, there has been a significant amount of work to develop commissioning plans, establish priorities and translating these into management agreements with the Delivery Units.</p>	<p>No</p>

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Governance Issues progress during 2014-15 (continued)

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update on Position	Carry Forward for 2015-16
<p><u>Contract Management Framework</u></p> <p>Across the Council a framework to manage contracts does not exist and instead each delivery unit develops their own approach, as a result there is an inconsistent way of measuring benefits achieved. Contracts can be tactical, operational, and strategic. Depending on the classification a different approach to the management of the contract and the level of information required will be used. Over the course of the year a contract management framework will be designed with a view implementation across Delivery Units and within the Commissioning Group.</p>	Commercial and Customer Services Director	<p>A new contract framework has been developed and is in place. It has been publicised and is used by Delivery Units across the council.</p> <p>This framework is currently being audited by Internal Audit and any improvements recommended will be added.</p>	No
<p><u>Change Management:</u></p> <p>The staff survey indicated that perceptions of change management were the least positive. There is an opportunity to improve staff engagement and satisfaction by building on the employee voice and engaging more with employees so they can contribute their views. Further the importance of managing and communicating change with employees so they are aware of what's happening in the council is recognised</p>	Strategic Commissioning Board	<p>Communication emerged as the most commented on theme in the staff survey. Following co-operative working within the Delivery Units a number of changes have taken place both corporately and Delivery Unit level; notably</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the smarter working programme each Delivery Unit has a representative in the form a Change Manger who attends bi-monthly meetings run by the Smarter working project team. The Change Manager is also appointed to the Transformation Change Management Board. 	Yes

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Governance Issues - progress during 2014-15 (continued)

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update on Position	Carry Forward for 2015-16
<p><u>Change Management (continued)</u></p> <p>The staff survey indicated that perceptions of change management were the least positive. There is an opportunity to improve staff engagement and satisfaction by building on the employee voice and engaging more with employees so they can contribute their views and managing and communicating change with employees so they are aware of what's happening in the Council.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In development is the Organisational Development Strategy (OD) which aims to support the Corporate Plan and deliver its objectives. It will set out the 'how' as an organisation we work to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver the priorities of the council. • ensure that all staff whether employed directly or through partner organisations feel part of Team Barnet • staff are supported to give of their best • reflect smarter working practices. • Barnet Staff Voice email account launched to encourage staff to ask questions and feedback. • Briefings on the council's plan for the future were ran by the Chief Executive. • Regular updates and newsletters for all staff have been introduced through Barnet Staff Voice. • Along with the council-wide 'Our Stars Awards' there are Delivery Unit-specific awards schemes. Eg Adults and Families joint staff awards ceremony for those who have become accredited. Family Services asked staff at their forum what they were proud of and shared results with all staff • Adult and Communities offered secondment opportunities for staff to be involved in delivering changes from the Care Act. • Street scene staff have been engaged with transformation process and design of BAU service changes, including briefing sessions on restructure, sessions to gather staff input, collecting FAQs, shadowing staff while working, weekly drop-in sessions, targeted work to continue the integrate two workforces (refuse). • Valuing staff health and well-being by implementing a Healthy Workplace Month. 	

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5. Governance Issues for 2015-16

The table below describes the governance issues identified during this review period 2014-15 to carry forward for monitoring within 2015-16

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Reporting thorough	Expected Delivery of Actions
<p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>The Following actions have been put in place to address configuration and data issues with HR CORE:</p> <p>a) Strategic support to service areas The council delivered a wide range of workforce changes during 2014/15, and in delivery of the Corporate Plan and MTFS through 2020 there will be further workforce changes. It is imperative that CSG HR provide sustainable and effective strategic HR capacity. To achieve this, CSG will put in place four new Business Partners by October 2015.</p> <p>In post new HR Director and new Operations Director (who both started in June 2015) to give new leadership impetus to the service.</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Senior Responsible Officer - HR</p>	Workforce Board	30 October 2015
<p><u>HR operations, system and data</u></p> <p>b) The establishment lists across the Council are all due to be signed off by Delivery Unit (DU) Directors 20 July 2015. At that point the establishment data in the system will be clean. Customer and Support Group (CSG) will also be putting in place a formal change process in order to capture any movements in the establishment (starters/leavers etc) so that the data remains clean. At the point this process is introduced the onus falls to the DUs to keep the data clean, as data is owned by the business not HR.</p> <p>This will be reviewed quarterly by the Workforce Board</p>			20July 2015

5. Governance Issues for 2015-16

The table below describes the governance issues identified during this review period 2014-15 to carry forward for monitoring within 2015-16

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Reporting thorough	Expected Delivery of Actions
<p>Human Resource – continued</p> <p>c) The council and CSG have identified a number of areas for operational HR improvement, including making accurate and effective absence reporting available to senior managers; ensuring DBS checks and HPCC registrations are reflected in the Core HR system and kept up to date; incorporating additional personal information into the system; and that managers and employees using the self-service systems have the right skills and knowledge of processes to completed this effective. CSG are addressing this through an improvement plan</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Senior Responsible Officer - HR</p>	<p>Workforce Board</p>	<p>30 October 2015</p>
<p>d) Payroll</p> <p>The council has set high thresholds for payroll accuracy. The council and CSG will be reviewing and testing the adequacy of payroll controls. Firstly, the Director of Payroll has outlined a plan for all the payroll centres, using an enhanced control framework that has been developed in conjunction with KPMG and will be subject to external audit, improving controls and reducing potential error. The council will also undertake an audit of Payroll during 2015/16.</p>		<p>Workforce Board and Audit Committee</p>	<p>Q2 November 2015 / Q3 February 2016</p>

5. Governance Issues for 2015-16

The table below describes the governance issues identified during this review period 2014-15 to carry forward for monitoring within 2015-16

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Reporting through	Expected Delivery of Actions
<p><u>Review of the New Committee System</u></p> <p>The council will undertake a review to assess the effectiveness of the committee system of decision making and governance brought into place in June 2014. The review will recommend amendments which will streamline and improve the current arrangements while ensuring the system delivers timely decisions to be made in accordance with the law and in an open, transparent and democratic way whilst providing value for money. A review of the constitution will be incorporated into this project. The outcome of the review will be reported to the Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee and Full Council</p>	<p>Assurance Director</p> <p>Head of Governance</p>	<p>Constitution, Ethics and Probity Committee - 16 November 2015</p> <p>Full Council – 8 December 2015</p>	<p>May 2016</p>

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5. Governance Issues for 2015-16

The table below describes the governance issues identified during this review period 2014-15 to carry forward for monitoring within 2015-16

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Reporting through	Expected Delivery of Actions
<p><u>Information Management – Data Management :</u></p> <p>Although there is a retention policy it is not well used. An aspect of the information strategy is to address this and currently there is a lot of enabling work to support this work stream as outlined below:</p> <p>Off-site records management: In preparation to move to an off-site paper records management provider, information was indexed to understand and classify (high level) the information we hold. The contract is now live and the new provider will provide disposal services based on a corporate retention schedule to be provided by October 2015.</p> <p>Information Audit: A comprehensive information audit has been undertaken and produced the start of an information asset register. The information asset register will provide structure and ownership to information holdings enabling a two way dialog between information asset owners and the information management team. This will provide another mechanism for reviewing and validating the current records retention policy to make sure it accurately reflects information holdings.</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Head of Information Management</p>		

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5. Governance Issues for 2015-16

The table below describes the governance issues identified during this review period 2014-15 to carry forward for monitoring within 2015-16

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Reporting through	Expected Delivery of Actions
<p><u>Information Management – Data Management (continued)</u></p> <p>Information Management Strategy – is expected to be approved in July 2015. The implementation roadmap will deliver technologies, like an Electronic Document & Records Management system(EDRMS), that will improve our records retention and destruction processes.</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Head of Information Management</p>		

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Appendix A: Published sources of Assurance

- Code of Corporate Governance
- Corporate Plan 2015-20
- Quarterly Performance Reports 2014-15
- Internal Audit, Risk Management and CAFT Annual Plan 2014-15
- Internal Audit Annual Report 2014-15
- Pay Policy 2014-15
- CAFT Annual Report 2014-15
- Audit Committee Annual Report 2014-15
- Audit Committee Terms of Reference and workplan
- Statement of Accounts and Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Committee minutes, agendas and reports 2014-15
- CSG and Re Commercial Contracts
- Equalities Annual Report (Draft)
- Consultation Forward Plan and Annual Report (Draft)

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6. Certification

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements, as defined above have been effectively operating during the year with the exception of those areas identified in Section 5. We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified during the review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Leader of the Council: _____

Date: _____

Chief Executive: _____

Date: _____

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