

## **POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2010/11**

#### **1. Scope of Responsibility**

- 1.1 Powys County Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and is used economically, efficiently and effectively. Powys County Council also has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility Powys County Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 Powys County Council adopted a system of corporate governance in June 2008, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. This statement will explain how Powys County Council has complied with the code.

#### **2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and where appropriate leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 2.2 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 of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Powys County Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 Powys County Council has been working to its system of Corporate Governance for the year ended 31 March 2011 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.

### 3. The Governance Framework

- 3.1 The Nolan Committee Report published in May 1995 set out seven principles of conduct which should underpin public life: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership. Good corporate governance incorporates these principles and requires local authorities to carry out their functions in a way that demonstrates accountability, transparency, effectiveness, integrity, and inclusivity.
- 3.2 Corporate governance is the system by which Powys County Council directs and controls its services and relates to the community. Good corporate governance is essential to making sure there is credibility and confidence in the public services provided.
- 3.3 Six core principles of good governance have been identified which form the key elements of Powys County Council's Code of Corporate Governance as follows:
- Principle 1** Focus on the Council's purpose and community needs, including making the best use of resources;
  - Principle 2** Members and Officers working together to achieve common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
  - Principle 3** Promoting Values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
  - Principle 4** Informed, transparent decision making which is subject to effective scrutiny and risk management;
  - Principle 5** Development of the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
  - Principle 6** Engagement with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.
- 3.4 The Council's governance arrangements have been reviewed against each of these principles in a self assessment. The commentary against each principle is set out on **Appendix A.**

#### **4. Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance Framework**

4.1 Powys County Council has a 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 the executive managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit Managers annual report and also by comments made by the external auditor and other review agencies and inspectorates.

4.2 The Council has appointed 3 committees with various responsibilities for overseeing and scrutinising its governance and internal control arrangements.

#### **4.3 Audit Committee**

4.3.1 This Committee has responsibility for:

- approving the Council's accounts;
- receiving the external auditors SAS610 report on the accounts;
- receiving the annual report of the Internal Audit Manager;
- obtaining assurance on the Council's corporate governance and risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti fraud and corruption arrangements;
- reviewing and approving (but not directing) the terms of reference for Internal Audit and IT strategy;
- reviewing and approving (but not directing) the internal audit programme;
- engaging with the external inspection agencies to ensure effective relationships between internal and external audit;
- making recommendations to the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer in respect of the Council's Constitution including financial regulations.

#### **4.4 Modernisation and Improvement Scrutiny Committee**

4.4.1 This Committee meets to hold decision makers to account and develop policy within its area of concern. This area includes the Powys Change Programme strategic overview, Local Service Board and Partnerships, Finance, Property and Corporate Services, Workforce planning and Legal, ICT and customers services.

#### 4.4.2 Standard items on the agenda considered each month are:

- Performance indicators;
- Financial overview and forecast;
- Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, Audit and Standards Committee;
- Workforce planning;
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

4.4.3 Specific attention in the year was given to Contract Management, the Corporate Asset Policy and server difficulties within the Information Technology department.

#### 4.5 **Standards Committee**

4.5.1 This Committee has responsibility for the Council's ethical framework, in particular ensuring the good conduct of officers and members and reviewing relevant codes and protocols.

#### 4.6 **Officer Responsibilities**

4.6.1 Officer responsibility for governance lies with the Chief Executive and the Management Team. The responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness and fitness for purpose of the Council's corporate governance arrangements and to lead the development and implementation of changes necessary to bring about improvement has been led by the Management Team.

#### 4.7 **Sources of Assurance**

4.7.1 In the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement assurance has been drawn from the following sources across the Council:

- Internal Audit Annual Report to Audit Committee in June 2011;
- The External Audit "Annual Audit Letter" – November 2010;
- The External Audit "Annual Improvement Report" –January 2011;
- The External Audits " General Corporate Assessment - June 2010;
- Self assessment against the Governance Code;
- Heads of Service Self Assessment against key criteria;

#### 4.8 **Audit and Inspection Opinions**

#### 4.9 **External Audit and Inspection Work**

4.9.1 On the 27th September 2010 external auditors produced an unqualified audit opinion on the Statement of Accounts, confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's and the Pension Fund's financial transactions.

4.10 The main conclusions of the external auditors Corporate Assessment which was issued to the Council in June 2010 are set out below:

- The Council's commitment to move from traditional departmental delivery, which has struggled to deliver its priorities, to a more ambitious, cross cutting and consensual approach has potential to deliver improvement provided effective supporting arrangements are developed promptly.

How the Council has approached improvement over time

- The Council has a recent history of change and has not consistently delivered its established priorities in some areas but its developing Strategic Change Model has the potential to support improvement, if it is promptly developed and carefully managed.
- The Council has not consistently delivered its long-standing priorities in some key service areas and its progress in other areas has been slow.
- The Council has a new management team and political administration which is committed to improving services and making best use of available resources.
- Achieving the Council's ambitious objectives will be difficult without simple and effective supporting arrangements delivered quickly by the new leadership.

Analysis of the Council's arrangements to help it improve

- New leadership and management arrangements are communicating the Council's vision and strategy and helping increase engagement but progress may be slowed by weaknesses in arrangements to support delivery of the strategic change agenda.
- The new management team is providing clear corporate leadership and supporting positive partnership working but is only beginning to develop the detail of its strategic change programme and business planning arrangements.
- The Council has a sound track record of budgetary control but service and financial planning arrangements are not well integrated and longer term financial planning is not yet adequate to support its strategic change agenda.
- People management is still underdeveloped and not helping the Council deliver improvement.
- Performance management arrangements are not adequate to support delivery of the cross cutting change programme.

4.11 The external Auditors produced their Annual Improvement Report in January 2011. This report sets out what the Council is trying to achieve, how it is going about it and what it needs to do to improve its approach to improving services. The main conclusions from this report were:

- The Council did a good job of sharing its plans with local people.
- The Service Improvement Plans clearly demonstrate that services have linked their own improvement objectives to the Council's overall improvement priorities. However, it is less clear that the choices made by the services can deliver the transformational change in service processes and outcomes intended by the Council.
- The Council has also not yet developed comprehensive financial plans to deliver its improvement objectives, and has yet to align its Medium Term Financial Plan to its improvement priorities.
- The audit found that the Council has put in place adequate systems to produce the majority of the 2009-10 national performance indicators used to measure performance. The detailed findings have been reported to the Council. However, the Council cannot yet demonstrate that it has an appropriate set of measures to assess its success in delivering its new improvement objectives.

4.12 Directors of Social Services are required to produce an annual self-assessment report on how well services are being delivered. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales (CSSiW) will then undertake a review and analysis of evidence underpinning the report, including evidence from other regulators and inspectors. This analysis will result in an individual inspection and review plan for each council. The CSSiWs analysis, and the inspection and review plan, will be set out annually in a published letter.

### **Internal Audit Work**

4.13 Internal audit complies with the Auditing Practices Board guideline "Guidance for Internal Auditors" as interpreted by CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government 2006.

4.14 Audit planning is risk based and the focus is on areas with higher identified risk. The reviews to Audit Committee focus on those service areas that are failing to implement the audit findings. Heads of Service have significantly improved their compliance since the introduction of the requirement to attend the committee along with the relevant portfolio holder to justify why non-compliance has occurred.

4.15 The audit manager also provides an annual independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control. The 2010/11 report is presented to Audit Committee in June 2011. It states that internal audit had completed 111 pieces of audit work in the year, of these 12 had a high risk, 33 a medium risk and 66 had a low risk. Within each audit a number of recommendations are made based on the audit findings. In the year there were 684 specific areas of weakness and non-conformances identified. Of these 105 were fundamental, 415 Significant and 165 Merit Attention.

4.16 Based on the Internal Audit work undertaken in the year and the positive findings of the fundamental systems reviews, it is the opinion of the Internal Audit Manager that Powys County Council has demonstrated for the financial year 2010-2011 Satisfactory Levels of Internal Control. This means a sound control environment exists with no fundamental breakdowns in control resulting in material discrepancy.

#### **4.17 Management Review**

In addition to the assurance provided by Internal audit, all heads of service have been required to complete a self assessment on the adequacy of the arrangements in place within their service area for the following areas:

- Constitution
- Project Management
- Training
- Business Planning
- Information Management
- Business Continuity
- Risk Management
- Health & Safety
- Internal Audit
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Anti-Fraud & Whistleblowing
- Performance Management

The results of these reviews are incorporated within the Principles of the Annual Governance Statement.

#### **Partnership Arrangements**

- 4.18 The Council continues to deliver both its strategic objectives and service through partnerships. Under the direction of the Powys Local Service Board (LSB), the four statutory plans for Community Strategy; Community Safety; Health Social Care and Well Being, and Children and Young People, have been integrated into the One Powys Plan 2011-14. Through a multi agency joint needs assessment 10 outcomes have been identified and agreed, with a suite of actions and measures currently being developed.
- 4.19 The Powys LSB partners have also acknowledged that the governance arrangements within partnerships needs to be reviewed, and a scoping document considering what this will encompass will be considered by the LSB in July 2011. It is also recognised that further work regarding the partnership structures is required in order for the effective delivery of actions identified under the One Powys Plan outcomes.
- 4.20 The work of other non statutory partnerships that the Council is involved (as listed in the Council's Partnership Register) is monitored to ensure that their work is aligned and adds value to the strategic objectives of the Council's Change Plan and the One Powys Plan.

## **5. Programme for Improvement of Significant Issues**

- 5.1 The Council is committed to the continuous improvement of our styles of management and leadership and the systems and processes within which staff operate. This will have a real impact on the culture of the organisation and our ability to achieve the desired outcomes.
- 5.2 The review of governance arrangements and the self assessment returns has identified areas where further improvements need to be made and where the Council needs to focus effort during 2011/12.

### **Recommendations for Improvements**

The following recommendations are suggested to improve Corporate Governance. These are considered by Audit Committee and following confirmation of the recommendations a monitoring and reporting timetable will be developed to ensure Audit Committee receives regular updates and assurance that the principles of good corporate governance are being upheld. It is a requirement that the statement is signed by the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to signify its importance.

- 5.3 In order to ensure the Corporate Governance Statement is embedded across the Council it should be subject to an annual self assessment process. This process will identify areas for development and improvement and will inform the annual update of the Statement.
- 5.4 A 'statement of Assurance' template should be provided to all Heads of Service, Portfolio holders and specific service managers, for them to positively affirm that their service area meets the requirements of good Corporate Governance. This should be an annual requirement. It is essential that the Corporate Governance Statement is owned by all senior officers and members of the Authority.
- 5.5 The main conclusions from the external auditors 'Annual Improvement Report' should be monitored by Audit Committee. The report specifically highlighted the need for the Council to develop its comprehensive financial plans by aligning its Medium Term Financial Plan to its improvement priorities.
- 5.6 It was also highlighted that the Council cannot yet demonstrate that it has an appropriate set of performance measures to assess its success in delivering its new improvement objectives. Audit Committee should monitor the development of these.
- 5.7 The Powys Local Service Board partners have acknowledged that the governance arrangements within partnerships needs to be reviewed. Audit Committee should ensure it receives positive assurance from the LSB that comprehensive governance arrangements will be established.
- 5.8 The Council should consider producing an Annual Report to bring together information about the priorities of the Council, its partners, its resources and achievements. It would primarily comprise of a summary of the Authority's accounts and a review of performance against established indicators.
- 5.9 Corporate Governance now forms an important part of the Annual Accounts and therefore meetings of the Scrutiny Committee should be held on a uniform basis.



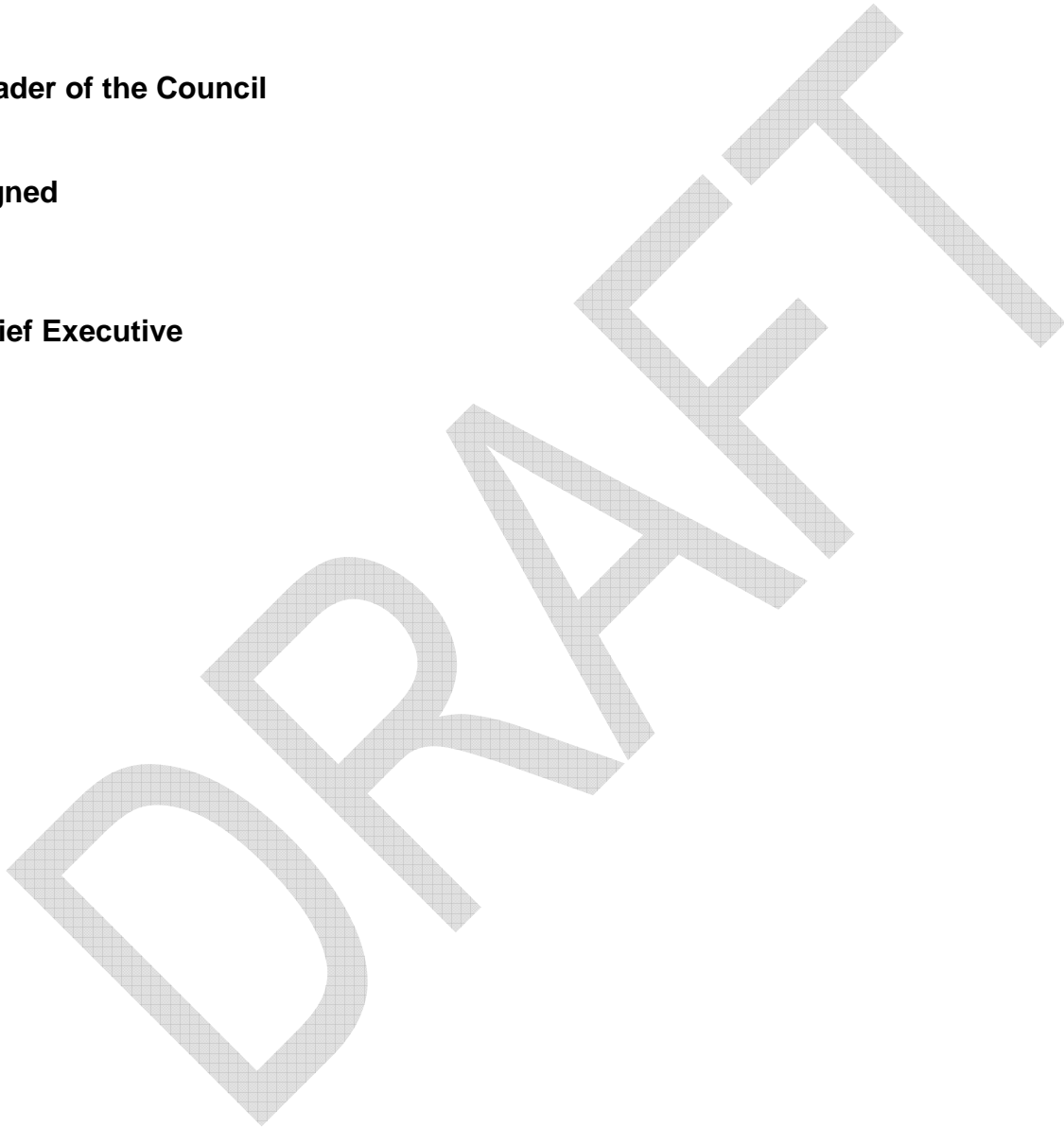
5.10 Subject to agreement of the above points, Audit Committee should approve the Corporate Governance Statement and recommend that the Leader and Chief Executive add their signatures to endorse the principles contained therein.

**Signed**

**Leader of the Council**

**Signed**

**Chief Executive**



## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CORE PRINCIPLES 2010/11

### PRINCIPLE 1

**Focus on the Council's purpose and community needs, including making the best use of resources.**

1.1 Powys County Council is committed to working with the community and delivering high quality services. In doing this it will make soundly based decisions, manage the risks that it faces and demand high standards of conduct from its Councillors and officers. The Council will work in partnership with the local community. When appropriate it will take the lead in promoting the well being of residents and at all times it will listen and respond to local demands.

We will do this by:

- Engaging with the community to ensure that we understand its expectations and in turn demonstrate how we are trying to meet them.
- Ensuring that we communicate with all sections of the community and encourage active participation in the activities of the Council.
- Undertake an 'ambassadorial' role to promote the well-being of the County.

1.2 The Council has a clear ambition. We want to deliver services which are efficient but not necessarily low in cost. More of our money must be spent on the service than overheads. This means processes need to focus on the customer not the organisation. Efficiency can also improve with joint service delivery with partners.

1.3 To achieve the vision of "Efficient Services for the Green Heart of Wales" the Council has evolved from the original four Improvement priorities and six efficiency priorities. The Powys Change Programme is now made up of 5 priority programmes supported by 14 sub-programmes which together will help us make the required savings and transform the council.

- 1.4 The Powys Change Programme, which forms the core of the Powys Change Plan (the Council's statutory improvement plan) structure is as below. However, it should be highlighted that this does not come into force until September 2011 and as such has not effectively contributed to 2010/11 Corporate Governance.

### **Powys Change Programme 2011/12**

<b>Priority Programme</b>	<b>Supporting Sub-Programme</b>
<b>Care &amp; Well- Being</b>	Adult Services Transformation
	Reconfigure Care Provider Services
	Joint Working – PtHB
	Early Intervention & Prevention (LAC)
	Housing Transformation
	Central Wales Social Services
<b>Learning &amp; Community</b>	Schools Modernisation
	Community Services Transformation
<b>Regeneration</b>	Regeneration
<b>Climate Change</b>	Waste Management
	Mitigation & Adaptation
<b>Council</b>	Support Services Transformation
	Workforce Transformation
	Commissioning & Procurement Transformation

- 1.5 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 states the lead responsibility that Local Authorities have in producing a community strategy for their area. While this process is being led by the County Council, all the public agencies are involved, and the strategy is considering all aspects of life in the county. In developing the 2011-14 strategy, an integrated 'One Powys' approach has been undertaken drawing together the four statutory plans/strategies for Community Planning; Community Safety; Children and Young People; and Health Social Care and Well Being.
- 1.6 The aim of the One Powys Plan is to make sure that local people can make their voices heard, whilst also ensuring that local services, whoever they are provided by, are better co-ordinated. The process is one that seeks to empower the community and to allow it to influence the long-term vision for Powys, and the way that public resources are allocated to communities over the next 10 to 15 years as reflected in the Council's Change Plan. A practitioners network of consultation and engagement officers from across the organisations and partnerships have also been tasked with consolidating and building upon the range of existing channels and mechanisms used across Powys to improve engagement in the One Powys approach on an ongoing basis.
- 1.7 Powys County Council's Citizen's Panel is an approximately 1,000 strong group of people who live in the county who are happy to be regularly consulted on the Council's work.

- 1.8 Being a member of the panel means individuals could get asked for their views on a variety of subjects. Recent topics have included communications, race equality as well as the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan. Forthcoming consultations include what arts provision is needed as well as street cleaning. Typically, the Council would hope to involve individuals in four consultation projects per year, and most of these would involve completing a questionnaire either sent to them by e-mail or through the post.
- 1.9 Those who serve on the panel do so voluntarily although they are paid expenses whenever they travel to a focus group or other meeting. The Panel seeks to be as representative as possible of the population of Powys. However at the moment we still need more people under 30 and we also need more Welsh speakers.
- 1.10 The Powys Change Programme is a co-ordinated, Council-wide programme that will provide focus for our work. In particular it will concentrate our effort and resources on priority areas where we have to meet extensive new challenges and need to perform better as a Council. The key factors that have influenced our priority setting include our corporate risk assessment and results from our Residents Survey 2009/10.
- 1.11 In identifying our priorities we have also looked at how our work can support the aims of other key plans, in particular the One Powys plan, which is the integrated plan for the whole County bringing together the work of many public service providers.
- 1.12 Communities have been directly consulted on budget setting and the schools modernisation programme. All Powys residents are sent a survey on an annual basis, the results of which are published online.
- 1.13 As well as meeting our local priorities, the Council is also working with the Welsh Government (WG) to help deliver national priorities. This is being done by means of an 'Outcome Agreement' and the Welsh Government is developing an agreement with each council in Wales.
- 1.14 As part of the agreement, Powys County Council selected 10 broad outcomes across ten Strategic Themes (one outcome per theme) and agreed key areas for improvement over the 3 year period 2011/14. The ten 'Outcomes' selected reflect the priorities identified in the Powys Change Plan.

## PRINCIPLE 2

### **Members and Officers working together to achieve common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.**

2.1 The Council has clearly outlined who is responsible for the discharge of responsibilities within the constitution and has:

- appointed a Chair of the Council;
- elected a Leader who has appointed a Cabinet of 9 members to serve with him on the Cabinet and allocated portfolio responsibilities to each;
- Most decisions are the responsibility of the Cabinet. Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed and the item is determined not to be in the public interest for disclosure;
- statutory officers in place with the skills and resources to fulfil those roles. Within the constitution it is set out what decisions are delegated to officers. The Section 151 officer has overall responsibility for the financial administration of the Council. Service departments are supported by central finance staff and budget monitoring and forecasts are reported to Cabinet 5 times per annum. The Monitoring officer has overall responsibility for legal issues. Legal staff work closely with service departments to provide advice and support. All reports to Cabinet require the views of the S151 officer and the monitoring officer;
- appointed committees to discharge the Council's regulatory responsibilities in respect of licensing, planning, rights of way, employment, and pensions and investments. Within the constitution it is set out what decisions are delegated to officers;
- appointed four scrutiny committees to carry out examination functions, with the Authority to "call-in" decisions made by Cabinet, in particular where they are not in accordance with the policy framework or budget;
- an audit committee that monitors the work of both internal and external auditors and inspectors, ensuring service departments respond and implement their recommendations. This includes quarterly monitoring of the audit plan and tracker and approval of the Statement of Accounts;
- a published constitution which contains all the rules and protocols which governs the operation of members and Officers, so there is clarity of roles and responsibilities at all levels;
- the Council has approved the Powys Change Plan setting out the Council's key priorities for 2011/14.

2.2 In order to further develop leadership capacity and improve engagement at all levels the Council has:

- a Heads of Service Group consisting of MT members and Business Heads which now meets monthly to develop leadership capacity, strengthen business planning, communication and involvement at senior levels.
- leadership conferences at least annually.

- roadshow days where senior staff can share key messages and hear from them how they are delivering services.
- monthly Staff newsletters.

2.3 To strengthen governance arrangements and to support members and officers in their roles, work has been undertaken to promote the awareness and understanding of particular aspects of the constitution:

- a member development and strategy programme is in force;
- specific training is given to members of the regulatory committees;
- financial management training, including treasury, to both members and officers;
- a range of mandatory courses for officers including employee management and development issues and political awareness.

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## PRINCIPLE 3

### **Promoting Values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.**

#### **Members Conduct**

- 3.1 The constitution contains the Code of Conduct for Members. The Code sets out the standards of conduct expected of members including standards of individual behaviour; registration of financial and other interests; and the rules governing disclosure of interests and participation in the decision making process where a member has a personal or prejudicial interest. The Standards Committee's annual report to Full Council details the work of the Committee over the past year.
- 3.2 Under the Code there is a register of members' Interests, which is the declaration Members have to make on a four yearly basis. This must be updated as and when there are changes together with copies of individual declarations Members make at meetings. All this information is published online on the Council's website.
- 3.3 The Standards Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000. It is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by members of the Council.
- 3.4 The Standards Committee deals with matters referred to it by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, who undertakes the initial assessment and decides if the matter is worth investigating and whether there is a case to answer by the member. The Standards Committee also monitor the whistle blowing policy.
- 3.5 The Standards Committee has 1 Sub-Committee, the Standards Community Sub-Committee, which deals with matters relating to Town and Community Councils. The Sub-Committee comprises 5 Independent members, 3 Town and Community Council representatives and 1 County Councillor
- 3.6 In 2010/11 no members were found to have breached the Code of Conduct for members. In the same period there have been no referrals to the Standards Committee for local determination.

#### **Officer Conduct**

- 3.7 Powys has a Code of Conduct for all employees. All employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of their Chief Officer or the Chief Executive or Union Representative, any deficiency in the provision of service. Employees must report to their Chief Officer or the Chief Executive any impropriety or breach of procedure.

## PRINCIPLE 4

### **Informed, transparent decision making which is subject to effective scrutiny and risk management.**

- 4.1 While some reports and background papers are confidential, Powys seeks to ensure that all the decisions of Council and Cabinet are made public. All agendas, reports and minutes, with the exception of confidential reports, are available through the Council's website.
- 4.2 The established Scrutiny Committees review areas of work undertaken by the Council where there are perceived to be issues or areas of concern. Scrutiny Committees also receive regular reports on financial and performance information and hold portfolio holders and officers to account.
- 4.3 The Audit Committee receive reports from Internal Audit and the Welsh Audit Office and hold portfolio holders and officers to account for delivering improvements.
- 4.4 Rules and procedures which govern how decisions are made, such as the constitution are publicly available.
- 4.5 The Council take customer complaints and comments seriously so that it can learn from mistakes. A three stage process has been established that clearly sets out what the public can expect in terms of action and feedback. If customers are still not satisfied details of the Local Government Ombudsman are provided and these are also available on the Powys website.
- 4.6 Further methods that the Council can be held to account are through the use of Freedom of Information requests and the Annual Inspection of Accounts opportunity which is advertised each year in the local press, online and on Town and Community Council Notice Boards.
- 4.7 The Corporate Risk Management Strategy, which is regularly reviewed, outlines the rationale for managing risk, the risk management process and responsibilities. The risk register is the designated portal for co-ordinating recognised risks. Risk reviews by Heads of Service have served to review existing risks as well as scanning for those which may emerge in the future. Key risks are recorded on the risk register together with agreed control measures to reduce the risk impact and probability, where appropriate. These control measures are then reflected in Service Strategies and Business Plans in order to achieve objectives.
- 4.8 Members are engaged in risk management through the Audit Committee and risk in relation to strategic decision making is addressed through the inclusion of a risk management commentary in Cabinet reports.
- 4.9 Work continues to embed risk management in all activities of the Council.



- 4.10 A Business Continuity Plan is in place that uses a risk based approach to identify the impacts of a disruption to critical services, together with responsibilities and actions required in the event of an emergency. Quality assurance of these arrangements is provided by the Insurance and Risk management team. The plan has been proven, to an extent, by the absence of any significant disruption to services during the adverse weather conditions in 2010.
- 4.11 In relation to equal pay claims the Council continues to manage this risk by aiming to complete the Job evaluation exercise by 2012 and pursuing a strategy to deal with the live claims.

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## PRINCIPLE 5

### **Development of the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.**

- 5.1 Powys County Council's five year people strategy was adopted in 2006. It was written after consultation with staff, trade unions and members.
- 5.2 Staff can view and book on to courses through the online Trent personnel system. Further development is by the corporate appraisal process, which requires management to review their development needs against an agreed set of manager expectations.
- 5.3 The revised Powys Change Programme has been designed to bring about changes in response to the pressures on resources facing all local authorities. The programme has established 5 priority programmes supported by 14 sub-programmes. One of the sub-programmes under the Council programme is workforce transformation which sets out the implementation of the Council's recently adopted workforce strategy.
- 5.4 The Powys Change Programme has established some clear expectations around how the Workforce will be organised in future. There is an expectation that greater collaboration takes place in the delivery of services, either with the Teaching Health Board or other partners. There is an expectation that employees will be empowered to make decisions around service delivery at lower levels within the organisation resulting in a more responsive public service as well as flatter management structures, less duplication and improved communication. There is also an expectation that employees will become more flexible in respect of the roles that they carry out and that multifunctional and multi-skilled roles are developed where possible.
- 5.5 Staff have already been shared between Powys County Council Social Service Departments and the Powys Teaching Health Board, but opportunities are also being developed with Ceredigion County Council for shared services. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2011 an agreement was signed to share the Strategic Director of Social Care Services post with Ceredigion Council. Both Councils have agreed to undertake a feasibility study into a regional collaboration of Central Wales Social Services.
- 5.6 The Council's Local Environment project aims to unlock the potential of frontline staff, free them to make work based decisions and remove bureaucracy without extended lines of supervision or management.
- 5.7 The Council has a well developed intranet which is always under review for ease of use. Information is also disseminated through the staff magazine, email, team briefings and staff roadshows.

- 5.8 The member development programme has been established to ensure members have the necessary skills to perform their tasks. The Council has established a Member Development Working Group which has been working to provide the background documentation, policies, and protocols so that the Council will be seeking to be awarded the WLGA Wales Charter for Member Support and Development.
- 5.9 In addition to providing monthly member development sessions based on a programme, other briefing sessions are held for members on a variety of subjects. The member Development Working Group has been responsible for the Council establishing a member Development Strategy, Member Role Descriptions and Person Specifications and a Competency framework for members undertaking a variety of roles which are included in the Council's Constitution. It has also developed a Member Mentoring Scheme, and is working on a Member Personal Review and Development Scheme, and other guidance in respect of Membership of outside bodies and use of social networking by Members.
- 5.10 The member Development programme is being reviewed to identify those development sessions which are mandatory e.g. Code of Conduct and those required for members of regulatory and other committees, and those development sessions which would be discretionary.

## PRINCIPLE 6

### **Engagement with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.**

- 6.1 The Council has a long history of community engagement and recognises it as being central to the Community Strategy. This is because community engagement is about ensuring that residents can participate in a range of different ways to drive improvements to local services.
- 6.2 There are currently many different types of community engagement processes and structures in the Council enabling residents and resident groups to put across their views in a way which can involve themselves in shaping services, these include:
- the Council's annual budget;
  - specific consultations such as on school improvements;
  - surveys such as the annual residents survey;
  - the opportunity to talk direct to their own Councillor;
  - the citizen's panel.
- 6.3 As well as the public Internet site, a tenants letter is produced each year which is sent to all Powys households. Each Council Tax bill will also have a leaflet explaining how Powys Council raise Council Tax together with details of its spending plans and other useful information.
- 6.4 A communications officer and strategy have been in place several years but the establishment of the Performance, Partnerships and Communications directorate will ensure a coordinated approach between all strategies and quality improvements and effectiveness of all internal and external communications.