

COMMITTEE:	Audit and Governance
MEETING DATE:	25 November 2025
BY:	Depute Chief Executive - Resources and Economy
REPORT TITLE:	Corporate Governance Framework
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the East Lothian Council Local Code of Corporate Governance and to confirm the approach to the development of the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/2026.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Recommend approval of the Local Code of Corporate Governance to East Lothian Council
- 2.2 Note the approach to the 2025/2026 annual assurance process and the development of the Annual Governance Statement.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As members will be aware, the Council is accountable to the public and other stakeholders for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance. To support this, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) as part of the Annual Accounts.
- 3.2 In previous years, the Council has developed the AGS by adopting the principles of good governance set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives model framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government ("the CIPFA/SOLACE framework" 2016).

- 3.3 This approach provided a framework to assess where the Council was in terms of governance. This exercise tested the design of the Council's internal control framework and improvement actions developed. The exercise and scoring regime did not attempt to rate how effectively or consistently controls were applied. This was instead undertaken during the population of assurance schedules by Heads of Service. Together these exercises combine to provide a holistic look across the Council's control framework, incorporating both design and application and provide a strong basis to draft the AGS.
- 3.4 In May 2025, CIPFA/SOLACE published an addendum to the 2016 Framework. The addendum strongly recommends that local authorities develop their own Local Code of Corporate Governance rather than adopting the principles set out in the 2016 Framework.
- 3.5 This report presents the East Lothian Council Draft Local Code of Corporate Governance. This will be used alongside updated assurance schedules and other sources of assurance (internal audit findings, risk management evidence, performance reports, external regulator findings etc) to support the development of the 2025/20206 AGS.
- 3.6 The CIPFA/SOLACE Scottish Guidance confirms that the draft Local Code is presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for review before consideration by the Council for approval.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct policy implications. Consideration of policy is made within the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: There will be no additional resource requirements to implement the Local Code of Corporate Governance and assurance approach for 2025/2026.
- 5.2 Human Resources: The assurance process will be led by the Council's Monitoring Officer but will require time and input from all senior officers.
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None
- 5.4 Risk: Risk is a key element of the Code and commentary is provided throughout.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 ***Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.***

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

X

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

[Enter information on impacts that have been identified]

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – East Lothian Draft Local Code of Corporate Governance

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 [CIPFA/SOLACE Addendum to Delivering Good Governance, May 2025](#)

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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Date	17 November 2025

Head of Service Approval

Name	Hayley Barnett
Designation	Head of Corporate Support
Confirmation that IIA and other relevant checks (e.g. finance/legal) have been completed	Confirmed
Approval Date	17 November 2025



East Lothian Council Local Code of Corporate Governance

East Lothian Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council operates through a governance framework for the conduct of its affairs which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.

The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles and requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, 2016 and the addendum, covering the annual review of governance and the annual governance statement, published in May 2025, will help to ensure proper arrangements continue to be in place to meet the Council's responsibilities.

The concept underpinning the Framework is that it assists local government in taking responsibility for developing and shaping an informed approach to governance, aimed at achieving the highest standards in a measured and proportionate way. The Framework helps authorities individually in reviewing and accounting for their own unique approach.

The overall aim is to ensure that:

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

The environment in which it works local government is increasing in complexity. Whether working with other authorities, public sector bodies, the third sector or private sector providers, local authorities must ensure that robust governance arrangements are established at the outset.

This necessitates the design of governance structures from the bottom up, ensuring that the core principles of good governance covering openness and stakeholder engagement, defining outcomes, monitoring performance and demonstrating effective accountability are integrated and embedded within the new structures and that mechanisms for effective scrutiny are established.

The 'Framework' defines the seven core principles of good governance, which the Council fully supports, namely:

- (i) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- (ii) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- (iii) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
- (iv) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- (v) Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- (vi) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- (vii) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

East Lothian Council aims to meet the highest standards of corporate governance to help ensure that it meets its objectives. It will test its structure against these principles by:

- Reviewing its existing governance arrangements against the 'Framework'
- Developing and maintaining an up-to-date Local Code of Governance including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness
- Preparing a Governance Statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which it complies with its own code on an annual basis, including how it has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes for the coming period.

The preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the Framework fulfils the statutory requirement for a local authority to conduct a review at least once in each financial year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and to include a statement reporting on the review within its Statement of Accounts.

This process not only creates an opportunity for the Council to set out its standards for good governance but also to ensure that its governance arrangements are seen to be sound. This is important as the governance arrangements in public services are closely scrutinised.

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

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

A1 Behaving with integrity

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation	Standards for elected members are set out in the Councillors Code of Conduct. The Employees Code of Conduct reflects the values and behaviours of the Council, The East Lothian Way, and “The Seven Principles of Public Life” identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life. It also signposts to Council’s Whistleblowing Policy. The Councillor/Officer Protocol was agreed by Council. The Scheme of Delegation sets out the powers delegated to Council Officers and ensures decisions are taken at the appropriate level. Officers are in place for statutory roles, including the Council’s Monitoring Officer.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Councillors' register of interest, expenses and membership of organisations are published on the Council's website. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy provides guidance to employees on reporting incidents of malpractice or wrongdoing. Performance Review and Development (PRD) is in place for employees and is based upon The East Lothian Way values and behaviours.
2	Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles)	The Council Plan 2022-27 (reprioritised in 2024) was agreed by Council and published on website. It sets out the values (The East Lothian Way), principles and behaviours that guide how the council and its staff operate.
3	Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions	The Council's Standing Orders govern the conduct of Council and committee meetings. The Scheme of Administration and Scheme of Delegation are in place to govern decision making. Council considers the findings of Standards Commission Scotland hearings within three months, required by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Declarations of interest are set out in the Council's Standing Orders which govern the conduct of each Council and Committee meeting. Councillors' register of interest, expenses and membership of organisations are published on the Council's website.
4	Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively	Councillors and Employees Codes of Conduct outline the arrangements for identifying, mitigating and recording conflicts of interest, hospitality and gifts. Declarations of Interest are set out in the Council's Standing Orders which govern the conduct of each Council and Committee meeting. Councillors' register of interest, expenses and membership of organisations are published on the Council's website Employees Code of Conduct signposts to The Council's Whistleblowing Policy. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy provides guidance to employees on reporting incidents of malpractice or wrongdoing. The Council's Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption is in place to tackle fraud with Counter Fraud Annual Plan's approved by the Audit and Governance Committee.

A2 Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance	Annual Governance Statement is the outcome of self-evaluation of compliance. The Audit and Governance Committee includes a role to ensure the highest standards of probity and public accountability are demonstrated.
2	Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation	Standards of conduct and behaviour are set out in the Councillors and Employees Codes of Conduct. Induction programmes include the above to ensure competency.
3	Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures	Employee Code of Conduct reflects the values of the Council, incorporates "The Seven Principles of Public Life" The East Lothian Way values and behaviours, set out in the Council Plan guide how the council and its staff operate. Performance Review and Development (PRD) is in place for employees and is based upon The East Lothian Way values and behaviours (referenced in PRD templates). East Lothian Council Complaints Handling Procedure is in place.
4	Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the organisation	The East Lothian Council Procurement Strategy 2023 -2028 sets out the values (The East Lothian Way), principles and behaviours that guide how the council and its external providers staff operate.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		An annual Procurement Report reported publicly is to give transparency to the Council's external spend with suppliers, and report on its compliance with the procurement regulations and performance against its procurement strategy. Relevant governance documentation sought to be put in place for external providers of services e.g. Enjoy Leisure, Chester Race Company Ltd, East Lothian Mid-Market Homes, the Brunton Theatre Trust.

A3 Respecting the rule of law

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance ccc	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations	The Council has appointed statutory officers as follows: Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, Depute Chief Executive Resources and Economy (section 95/chief finance officer), Chief Education Officer, Chief Internal Auditor, Chief Social Work Officer, Chief Planning Officer and Data Protection Officer. Advice and overseeing compliance on legal and governance matters is provided by the Council Solicitor and the Monitoring Officer as set out in Scheme of Delegation.
2	Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements	The Scheme of Delegation sets out the roles, responsibilities and delegations for statutory officers and Chief Officials. Membership of Professional Bodies is required.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance ccc	Demonstration of good governance in practice
3	Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders	The Council's Standing Orders including the Scheme of Administration, the Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations reflect the legal requirements placed upon the authority. These documents are reviewed annually.
4	Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.	The Head of Corporate Support fulfils the Monitoring Officer statutory role and is responsible for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with. Advice and overseeing compliance on legal and governance matters is provided by the Council Solicitor and the Monitoring Officer as set out in Scheme of Delegation.
5	Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively	The Council's Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption is in place to tackle fraud with Counter Fraud Annual Plan's approved by the Audit and Governance Committee. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy provides guidance to employees on reporting incidents of malpractice or wrongdoing. Internal Audit used to investigate any alleged incidents of breaches of legal and regulatory provisions, corruption or misuse of power. The Council's Disciplinary Policy is in place for employees.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance ccc	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Annual elected member training in place on the Councillors' Code of Conduct. The Standards Committee is responsible for dealing with matters relating to conduct and ethical standards. Council considers the findings of Standards Commission Scotland hearings within three months, required by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders

B1 Openness

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness	Behaviours demonstrated in B1.2. B1.3 and B1.4. Compliance with Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information legislation.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
2	Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided	All meetings set out within the Scheme of Administration held in public. The rationale for those held in private documented (Schedule 7a. of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973) Council and committee meetings webcast. Council and committee reports, minutes, workplans and action logs are published on the Council's website. Annual schedule of Council and Committee meetings are agreed by Council and published.
3	Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear	Committee report templates in place include a section on implications covering policy implications, resources – finance, human resources and other (legal/IT) risk and integrated impact section. Report writing guidance in place for report authors. All reports must be signed off by the relevant Head of Service (including explicit confirmation that the integrated impact assessment has been considered) and Executive Director.
4	Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action	Community Engagement and Participation Strategy under development. This is led by the East Lothian Partnership and is due to be complete by March 2026. Local Area Plans under development via the Area Partnerships. Service specific consultation is also undertaken via the Council's consultation hub. Community Asset Transfer and Participation Request processes in place

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice

B2 Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably	The East Lothian Partnership (Community Planning Partnership) has in place the East Lothian Plan 2017-2027 as the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). The East Lothian Partnership is currently working towards a new Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036. The East Lothian Partnership LOIP is informed by Strategic Needs Assessments (SNA) following a period of co-production including streamlining partners strategic plans.
2	Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively	The Council has in place formal partnerships under the East Lothian Partnership and extensive engagement with statutory partners, Queen Margaret University and private business. The Council along with NHS Lothian work together to plan and deliver adult community health and social services through the Health and Social Care Partnership. The Council effectively works in partnership as part of the City Region Deal.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		There are six Local Area Partnerships in East Lothian. These are chaired by local residents and supported by the Council. Elected members from the relevant wards attend the partnerships. The partnerships foster good engagement and communication between local communities and the Council. The Council's key engagement with the third sector is via VCEL (East Lothian's third sector interface). Elected members and trade union officials meet as the Joint Consultative Committee.
3	Ensuring that partnerships are based on: • trust; • a shared commitment to change; • a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners; and • that the added value of partnership working is explicit	Please see B2.1 and B2.2 The East Lothian Partnership (Community Planning Partnership) has in place the East Lothian Plan 2017-2027 as the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) as a shared commitment to change. The East Lothian Partnership undertook a self-assessment between November 2024-March 2025. This produced an Improvement Plan which sought to strengthen the governance, reporting procedures, representation and community engagement with partners. Through the development of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2026-2036, there has been a commitment to a journey of change, improvement, shared values and structures to improve culture between statutory and community partners. The Audit and Governance Committee, the Policy, Performance and Risk Committee and Council receives reports from key partners including the East Lothian Integration Board, Enjoy Leisure, East Lothian Land Ltd, East Lothian Investments Ltd, the Brunton Theatre Trust, the Edinburgh Innovation Hub and the City Region Deal.

B3 Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes	Community Engagement and Participation Strategy under development. This is led by the East Lothian Partnership and is due to be complete by March 2026.
2	Ensuring that communication methods are effective, and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement	Community Participation Opportunities Guide Community Engagement and Participation Strategy under development. This is led by the East Lothian Partnership and is due to be complete by March 2026. The Consultation Hub on the council website gives online public access to consultations and includes a “we asked, you said, we did” section to give clarity on how feedback has been used. Communications Strategy 2022-27
3	Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs	Community Engagement and Participation Strategy under development. This is led by the East Lothian Partnership and is due to be complete by March 2026. The Consultation Hub on the council website gives online public access to consultations and includes a “we asked, you said, we did” section to give clarity on how feedback has been used.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		The Council has put robust arrangements in place to comply with key elements of the Community Empowerment Act.
4	Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.	The East Lothian Partnership Engagement Report, 2025 represents the voice of over 25,000 residents and 100 represented community partners or data sets. The bi-annual East Lothian Residents Survey provides an important source of information about residents' views about priorities and services (send to a representative group of 10,000 residents). The Council seeks feedback through the Complaints Handling Procedure. The Council is currently actively working with Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL) to support lived experience panels and engages with partner panels e.g. Carers of East Lothian- Carers Panel, Who Cares Scotland – Young Champs, Health and Social Care Partnership – Live Experience Panel, Bridges – Youth Ambassadors, Recharge – Young Reformers etc.
5	Taking account of the interests of future generations of taxpayers and service users	Annual Student Evaluation Experience (Education) Youth Work Strategy and Youth Work panels The East Lothian Promise Framework Review of policies and procedures of the Council under United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC).

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

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

C1 Defining outcomes

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions	The East Lothian Partnership (Community Planning Partnership) has in place the East Lothian Plan 2017-2027 as the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). The Council Plan 2022-27 (reprioritised in 2024) was agreed by Council and published on website. It sets out the vision and intended outcomes of the Council. In June 2025, the Council agreed a refined set out Council Plan Actions to provide a basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.
2	Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer	Council and committee reports outlining any proposals to change policies, strategies and plans include a section on implications covering policy implications, resources – finance, human resources and other (legal/IT) risk and integrated impact section.
3	Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available	Council Plan Action Plan agreed by Council. Quarterly financial performance reported to Council including revenue, capital and Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Refreshed Performance Framework agreed June 2025.
4	Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes	Risk Management Strategy is in place. The Corporate Risk Register is presented to Council twice a year and the Audit and Governance Committee scrutinise and each Head of Service's Risk Register. The officer Corporate Risk Group meets quarterly and reports to the Council Leadership Team and Local Risk Working Groups are in place within each service area.
5	Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available	The bi-annual Residents Survey provides an important source of information about residents' views about priorities and services. The Council holds a budget consultation in advance of setting the annual revenue and capital budgets including the level of Council Tax. Consultation also takes place annually in advance of setting the levels of Council House rents and Housing Revenue account budget. Service specific consultation is also undertaken via the Council's consultation hub.

C2 Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision	The 2022-2027 Council Plan was set within the context of the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by East Lothian and in February 2024 the Council agreed a reprioritisation of the Council Plan in order to respond to the new challenges and the limited resources it has the Council focusing on delivering a smaller number of priorities. Refined set out Council Plan Actions approved by the Council in June 2025 to support the delivery of the reprioritised Council Plan. Five Year Financial and Capital Strategies agreed and set out the framework as to how resources will be deployed to support Council priorities. Established budget development process in place. The Council holds a budget consultation in advance of setting the annual revenue and capital budgets including the level of Council Tax. Integrated Impact Assessments carried out to assess impact of decisions and policies on equalities groups. The process sets equality considerations alongside the Council's social policy objectives and also considers the impact of decisions in relation to the environment and the economy. Committee report templates in place include a section on implications covering policy implications, resources – finance, human resources and other (legal/IT) risk and integrated impact section.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
2	Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints	Five Year Financial and Capital Strategies agreed and set out the framework as to how resources will be deployed to support Council priorities. Quarterly financial performance reported to Council including revenue, capital and Prudential and Treasury Indicators. Transformation Strategy 2024-2029 agreed recognising the need to modernise how services are delivered within the context of financial challenges and ever-changing external pressures. Procurement Strategy 2023-2028 recognises the key role the Council has to deliver social, economic and environmental outcomes.
3	Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs	The bi-annual Residents Survey provides an important source of information about residents' views about priorities and services. The Council holds a budget consultation in advance of setting the annual revenue and capital budgets including the level of Council Tax. Consultation also takes place annually in advance of setting the levels of Council House rents and Housing Revenue account budget. Service specific consultation is also undertaken directly with client/user groups via the Council's consultation hub. The Council seeks feedback through the Complaints Handling Procedure.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
4	Ensuring fair access to services	Reducing Inequalities is an overarching objective of the Council Plan 2022-2027. Equality Plan 2025-2029 agreed by Cabinet. Equality Plan action plan reported publicly through the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports. Integrated Impact Assessments carried out to assess impact of decisions and policies on equalities groups. The process sets equality considerations alongside the Council's social policy objectives and also considers the impact of decisions in relation to the environment and the economy.

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

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

D1 Determining interventions

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided.	Council and committee reports outlining any proposals to change policies, strategies and plans include a section on implications covering policy implications, resources – finance, human resources and other (legal/IT) risk and integrated impact section. Report writing guidance in place for report authors. All reports must be signed off by the relevant Head of Service (including explicit confirmation that the integrated impact assessment has been considered) and Executive Director. Committee reports are published on Council’s website one week in advance of meeting dates. Officers and subject matter experts attend Council and Committee meetings to advise as appropriate. Business Case development and approval process in place for transformation project establishment including options appraisals, outcome/benefit realisation and risk assessments. Stage Gate Review process in place for Projects.
2	Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available	The bi-annual Residents Survey provides an important source of information about residents’ views about priorities and services. The Council holds a budget consultation in advance of setting the annual revenue and capital budgets including the level of Council Tax.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
	including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts	Consultation also takes place annually in advance of setting the levels of Council House rents and Housing Revenue account budget. Service specific consultation is also undertaken directly with client/user groups and via the Council's consultation hub.

D2 Planning interventions

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets	Annual calendar of Council and Committee meetings published. All new and reviewed strategies and policies approved by the Cabinet or the Council. Scrutiny of corporate (strategic) and service performance (tactical) at the Policy, Performance and Review Committee as per agreed work programme following review by the Corporate Management Team. Operational (Service) level performance is managed in line with our service planning guidance and reported via statutory reporting required by specific legislation or regulations. Participation and annual completion of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
2	Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered	As D1.2 The Council has in place formal partnerships under the East Lothian Partnership and extensive engagement with statutory partners, Queen Margaret University and private business to support different models of service delivery. The Joint Consultative Committee is the corporate committee for formal trade union engagement. Trade Unions are also engaged through local joint consultative groups across the Council. Service Specific staff engagement events also take place e.g. Asset Review: Place Making Proposals.
3	Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks	Engagement with Scottish Government on Scottish National Risk Register and consideration of risk in relation to the Council's Risk Register. Engagement with UK Government on National Security Risk Register and consideration of risk in relation to the Council's Risk Register. East Lothian Council Risk Management Strategy 2023-2026 is in place.
4	Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances	East Lothian Council's Improvement Framework – Improvement to Excellence (i2e) ensures delivery of continuous improvement and Best Value across all Council services.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Operational Service Plans in place. The Service Plan provides a more specific representation of what is involved in the delivery of outcomes and priorities, recognising the resource implications, actions and risks concerned. These are on place for three years but are on a regular basis and adapted to changing circumstances.
5	Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured	Refreshed Performance Framework agreed June 2025. Corporate (strategic) annual performance presented to the Policy, Performance and Review Committee, following the Corporate Leadership Team review. Service (tactical) performance presented quarterly as per agreed work programme. KPIs and key actions reviewed in line with committee reporting requirements. These reports show the progress the services have made towards the priorities set out within the Council Plan. Operational (Service) level performance is managed in line with the Council's service planning guidance and reported via statutory reporting required by specific legislation or regulations. Guidance in place to support the development of performance indicators.
6	Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly	East Lothian Council's Improvement Framework – Improvement to Excellence (i2e) ensures delivery of continuous improvement and Best Value across all Council services. All services undertake annual reviews of three-year Service Plans. Service Plans include sections on Outcomes and Priorities/Service Outcome Indicators. The main

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		source of content for the Service Plan is self-evaluation. This includes Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF), currently being rolled out on a service-by-service basis. Guidance is in place to support self-evaluation. Action plans are developed by the relevant service following any internal audit inspections. (See section F3 – robust internal control) Action plans are developed corporately or by the relevant service following an independent inspection.
7	Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium-term financial plan	Cross-Party Budget Group in place. Budget development process agreed by Council. Budget modelling and scenario planning carried out. Five Year Financial and Capital Strategies agreed and set out the framework as to how resources will be deployed to support Council priorities. Business Case development and approval process in place, capital spend including options appraisals, outcome/benefit realisation and risk assessments.
8	Informing medium- and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy	Five Year Financial and Capital Strategies agreed and set out the framework as to how resources will be deployed to support Council priorities. Quarterly financial performance reported to Council including revenue, capital and Prudential and Treasury Indicators.

D3 Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring the medium-term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints	Five Year Financial and Capital Strategies agreed and set out the framework as to how resources will be deployed to support Council priorities. Quarterly financial performance reported to Council including revenue, capital and Prudential and Treasury Indicators.
2	Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term	See D3.1
3	Ensuring the medium-term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage	See D3.1
4	Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning <i>(Social Value is technically referred to as Community Benefit in Scotland)</i>	The East Lothian Council Procurement Strategy 2023 -2028 sets out the vision <i>To provide excellent services that deliver best value procurements with Community Benefits that support recovery and renewal, reduce poverty and inequality and respond to the climate emergency</i> Community Benefits is contractual obligation for where the aggregated spend is more than £50k and a statement/question is included in the tender documents for all such contracts.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		An annual Procurement Report reported publicly demonstrating achieved community wealth benefits. Established Community Wealth Building Sub-Groups (e.g. Progressive Procurement Group) with direct input into Local Development Strategy. Community Wealth Building Charter and action plan in place (approved by the East Lothian Partnership).

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

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

E1 Developing the entity's capacity

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness	All services undertake annual reviews of three-year Service Plans. Refreshed Performance Framework agreed June 2025 (see review governance at D2.5). Use of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and participation in relevant benchmarking exercises Asset Review: Place Making in progress. Corporate Asset Group meetings on a regular basis. East Lothian Council's Improvement Framework – Improvement to Excellence (i2e) ensures delivery of continuous improvement and Best Value across all Council services. Transformation Strategy 2024-2029 in place and governed by the Transformation and Major Projects Group (Corporate Leadership Team, meet 6-weekly)
2	Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently	Refreshed Performance Framework agreed June 2025 (see review governance at D2.5). Use of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework and participation in relevant benchmarking exercises

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
3	Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved	The Council has in place formal partnerships under the East Lothian Partnership and extensive engagement with statutory partners, Queen Margaret University (QMU), the third sector and private business to support different models of service delivery. Formal Governance arrangements in place with key partners e.g. Joint Venture agreement with QMU. Grant letter issue third sector providers.
4	Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources	The 2023-2027 Workforce Plan in place. Action Plan in place to respond to Audit Scotland recommendations to improve ELC's Workforce Plan 2023-2027 as part of the Workforce Innovation Audit. Service level workforce planning requirements incorporated into Service Plans Strategic Workforce Plan 2026-2029 development underway.

E2 Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the	Induction Programme for elected members to understand roles, responsibilities and standards.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
	relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	The Councillor/Officer Protocol was agreed by Council. Regular meetings are held between Chief Executive, Leader, Provost and Group Leaders. Fortnightly Council Leadership Group with senior officers and Cabinet Members. Pre-meetings for Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings
2	Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body	The Scheme of Delegation sets out the roles, responsibilities and delegations for statutory officers and Chief Officials. Membership of Professional Bodies is required. The Council's Standing Orders including the Scheme of Administration which reflects the powers delegated by Council to specific committees, the Scheme of Delegation which reflects the decision-making responsibilities delegated to officers, and the Financial Regulations. These documents are reviewed annually, approved by Council and published on the Council's website.
3	Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure, whereby the chief executive leads the authority in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority	Please see A 1.4 and E2.1 Regular meetings are held between Chief Executive and Leader. The Chief Executive is a Statutory post (Head of Paid Service) with Job Outline in place, Particular delegations to Chief Executive are detailed within the Scheme of Delegation. The Head of Corporate Support fulfils the Monitoring Officer statutory role provides advice, if required on decision making and delegations.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
4	Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:-	Monthly Member's Briefing Sessions include training, policy changes, service delivery changes, politically sensitive matters. Induction Programme and access to Learn-Pro Online courses, Seminars and national resources. Fortnightly Council Leadership Group with senior officers and Cabinet Members. Leadership Development Programme in place for the Corporate Leadership Team, Inspiring Leaders programme in place. Performance Review and Development (PRD) is in place for employees and is based upon The East Lothian Way values and behaviours.
-	- ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged	Engagement with candidates in advance of Local Government elections. Please also see E2.4
-	- ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis	Identification of training needs for elected members as part of the elected member Induction Programme. Skills Matrix in place for Audit and Governance and Policy, Performance and Review Committee. Performance Review and Development (PRD) is in place for employees. Learning at Work Policy for Employees.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
-	- ensuring personal, organisational and system wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from both internal and external governance weaknesses	Performance Review and Development (PRD) is in place for employees LeFssons Learned exercise carried out as part of programme/project governance approach and regulated procurement projects. Council Improvement Plan in place and monitored. Audit actions monitored e.g. Corporate Leadership Team review Internal Audit actions.
5	Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation	All meetings set out within the Scheme of Administration held in public. Council and committee meetings webcast. Council and committee reports, minutes, workplans and action logs are published on the Council's website. Annual schedule of Council and Committee meetings are agreed by Council and published. Community Participation Opportunities Guide Community Engagement and Participation Strategy under development. This is led by the East Lothian Partnership and is due to be complete by March 2026. Application of requirements of the Community Empowerment Act.
6	Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections	Leadership Development Programme in place for the Corporate Leadership Team Corporate Leadership Team, Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) Self-Evaluation carried out in 2023. PSIF currently being rolled out on a service-by-service basis. Audit and Governance Committee Annual Self-Evaluation process.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Policy, Performance and Review Committee Development Plan in place.
7	Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs	Performance Review and Development (PRD) is in place for employees. Guidance is provided for managers and staff noting regular reviews should take place to monitor progress. Specific section within templates on training and development needs.
8	Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing	Range of relevant HR policies including Flexible Working Hours, Flexible Retirement, Home Working, Learning at Work, Managing Attendance, Menopause and Hormonal Conditions, Shared Parental Leave, Special Leave, Time Off in Lieu, Healthy Working Lives in place Employee Assistance Programme with access to occupational health, mental health support, physiotherapy, massage and reflexology, financial well-being support, 'wellness Wednesday' Wellness Action Plans Listening Ears Programme where volunteer 'good listeners' are available for employees to reach out to with concerns. Health and Wellbeing initiatives monitored by the Joint Consultative Committee

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

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.

A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.

It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

F1 Managing risk

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making	East Lothian Council Risk Management Strategy 2023-2026 is in place. Risk Appetite Statement in place. Committee report templates in place include a section on implications covering risks. Business Case development and approval process in place for transformation project establishment including options appraisals, outcome/benefit realisation and risk assessments. The Corporate Risk Register and Service level risk registers are reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		The Corporate Risk Register is presented to Cabinet annually and scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee. Service level risk registers scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee.
2	Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively	Each service is responsible for identification; assessment; recording; and management of operational risks. Risk Registers in place for all Council Services recorded and managed on risk management software. Corporate Risk Management team in place. The Corporate Risk Management team hold focused annual 'risk' months with each Head of Service to focus on embedding and reviewing risk management. Guidance documents on risk management and use of the risk management software are available for officers.
3	Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated	Responsibilities for risks are set out in risk registers and allocated on the risk management software.

F2 Managing performance

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post-implementation review	Service Plans in place. All services undertake annual reviews of three-year Service Plans.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Scrutiny of corporate (strategic) and service performance (tactical) at the Policy, Performance and Review Committee as per agreed work programme, following review by the Corporate Management Team. Operational (Service) level performance is managed in line with our service planning guidance and reported via statutory reporting required by specific legislation or regulations. Performance reporting published on Council's website. Procurement - contract and supplier management (CSM). Where requirements are identified, supplier obligations are included within tender documents and monitored as part of on-going contract and supplier management.
2	Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook	Committee report templates in place include a section on implications covering policy implications, resources – finance, human resources and other (legal/IT) risk and integrated impact section. Report writing guidance in place for report authors. All reports must be signed off by the relevant Head of Service (including explicit confirmation that the integrated impact assessment has been considered) and Executive Director.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
3	Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible (OR, for a committee system) Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement	The Council's scrutiny arrangements are established through the Council's Scheme of Administration – Audit and Governance Committee, Policy, Performance and Review Committee and Police Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee and reviewed annually. Both committees meet quarterly and have a workplan in place, officers attend to respond to scrutiny questions, constructive links to senior officers including Chief Internal Auditor. Committee self-evaluation exercises take place on a regular basis and development plans developed and monitored as required. Committee agenda and minutes are published on the Council's website. Also see F2.1
4	Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement	See F2.1
5	Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post-implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements)	Governance arrangements in place including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

F3 Robust internal control

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives	See F1.1 Risk Management Policy Internal Audit review risk management arrangements on an annual basis Risk based Internal Audit Plan approved by the Audit and Governance Committee. External and Internal auditors provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of control measures.
2	Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis	Risk based Internal Audit Plan approved by the Audit and Governance Committee. Review of Risk Management areas and each Internal Audit by the Corporate Leadership Team. Annual reporting by Internal Audit to the Audit & Governance Committee on the overall effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and internal control as part of the process for preparation of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.
3	Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place	The Council's Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption is in place to tackle fraud with Counter Fraud Annual Plan's approved by the Audit and Governance Committee. The Integrity Group (senior officers, chaired by the Council's Monitoring Officer) meet quarterly to improve the Council's resilience to fraud, corruption, theft and crime (including cybercrime and money laundering). The Integrity Group is accountable to the Council Leadership Team, the S95 Finance Officer, and annually will provide assurance and to the Audit & Governance Committee.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Counter Fraud Officer in post based within the Internal Audit Function. Service Level Fraud Risk Assessments in place (to inform Corporate Risk Assessment). Fraud Risk Register in Place. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy provides guidance to employees on reporting incidents of malpractice or wrongdoing. Internal Audit used to investigate any alleged incidents of breaches of legal and regulatory provisions, corruption or misuse of power.
4	Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor	Internal Audit provide an annual assurance statement on the effectiveness of the council framework of governance risk management and Internal Control this is then used as part of preparation of the Council's Annual Governance Statement. Internal Audit reports directly to the Audit & Governance Committee on provision of the Internal Audit statutory service and conformance with Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS). Stage Gate Review process in place for Projects.
5	Ensuring an Audit and Scrutiny Committee or equivalent group or function which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:	The role of the Audit and Governance Committee is to have high-level oversight of internal control, governance and risk management.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
	- provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment - that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon	Independence is maintained through membership composition. No Cabinet members are permitted to be on the Committee, all political parties are represented. Annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of Audit and Governance Committee Annual Internal Audit Report and Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Opinion. Committee Action log in and work plan place.

F4 Managing data

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data	Centralised Information Governance Team that monitors and assesses compliance with its statutory obligations under information governance legislation. Data Protection Policy (and processes) Access to Information Policy Information Asset Register Records Management Policy Mandatory and regular (Meta-Compliance) training for all staff Information Governance Annual Report to Audit and Governance Committee.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
2	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies	As F4.1 Data sharing protocols are in place. Data sharing arrangements in place with partners and suppliers. Periodic Internal Audit reviews covering Information Governance.
3	Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring	Quality and validation of data used in decision making and performance reporting is typically the responsibility of the service area. Internal Audit annual reviews on Performance Management cover validation of the KPI data submitted for Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

F5 Strong public financial management

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring financial management supports both long-term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance	As D2.8, D3.
2	Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls	Budget monitoring framework and procedures in place. This is reviewed regularly and endorsed by the Council Leadership Team. Monitoring of financial risk and associated controls is reported regularly to the Audit and Governance Committee and as part of financial update reports to Council.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Implementation of recommendations from external and internal audit and reviewed and monitored by the Audit & Governance Committee.

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

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

G1 Implementing good practice in transparency

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate	Public Performance Reporting published on Council's website. Committee report templates and report writing guidance in place for report authors. Council and Committee reports published on the Council website.
2	Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public	All meetings set out within the Scheme of Administration held in public. The rationale for those held in private documented (Schedule 7a. of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973)

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
	scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand	Council and committee meetings webcast. Council and committee reports, minutes, workplans and action logs are published on the Council's website. Public Performance Reporting published on Council's website. Committee report templates and report writing guidance in place for report authors. The Council produces and publishes statutory annual accounts which are subject to external audit. Public Performance Reporting published on Council's website. Service-specific Annual Reports presented e.g. Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report.

G2 Implementing good practices in reporting

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources	Refreshed Performance Framework agreed June 2025 with annual reports presented to the Policy Performance and Review Committee. The Statement of Accounts, incorporating a Management Commentary, provides financial and other performance information regarding the operation of the Council, its wider achievements and areas for development. The Statement of Accounts is produced in accordance with statutory guidelines and deadlines.

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		External Audit Annual Report provides assurance and key recommended improvements. An annual Procurement Report reported publicly is to give transparency to the Council's external spend with suppliers, and report on its compliance with the procurement regulations and performance against its procurement strategy.
2	Ensuring members and senior management own the results	Meeting dates of Corporate Leadership Team (senior officers) and the Council Leadership Team (senior officers and elected members) and other senior management and elected member forums have been aligned to enable appropriate engagement and consultation prior to Council, Cabinet and Committees. Outcomes and actions from meetings are tracked.
3	Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (annual governance statement)	A self-evaluation of compliance with the Governance Framework is undertaken annually. The Annual Governance Statement is the outcome of that process alongside the assurance statements provided by each Head of Service and Depute Chief Executive. Areas for Improvement are monitored in the Council Improvement Plan and scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee.
4	Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate	The annual assurance process and the Annual Governance Statement reflect the assurances received from Heads of Service and Depute Chief Executives which covers the Council's service delivery arrangements.
5	Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis	The Statement of Accounts, incorporating a Management Commentary, provides financial and other performance information regarding the operation of the Council, its wider achievements and areas for development. The

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
	and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations	Statement of Accounts is produced in accordance with statutory guidelines and deadlines.

G3 Assurance and effective accountability

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
1	Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon	External Audit reports outlining findings and recommendations (including follow-up progress) are presented to the Audit and Governance Committee. Actions incorporated into the Council Improvement Plan and scrutinised by the Audit and Governance committee.
2	Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon	Chief Internal Auditor meets regularly with Chair of Audit Committee. Regular reports on Internal Audit activity, performance and compliance presented to the Audit Committee. Regular reports are presented to the Audit Committee on Management's progress with implementation of recommendations made by Internal Audit to ensure these are acted upon. Compliance with Global Internal Audit Standards.
3	Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations	Reports by external scrutiny and inspection bodies outlining findings and recommendations presented to relevant committee (e.g. Education Scotland Inspection reports and follow up visits are presented to the Education and

	Behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance	Demonstration of good governance in practice
		Children's Service Committee) including associated Action Plans for improvement.
4	Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement	The annual assurance process and the Annual Governance Statement reflect the assurances received from Heads of Service and Depute Chief Executives which covers the Council's service delivery arrangements. All ALEO organisations report on an annual basis to the Audit & Governance Committee
5	Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met	As G4.4 and relevant service level agreements are in place with partners. The East Lothian Partnership and the Integration Joint Board have their own governance frameworks in place to align with the Council's governance framework.