

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Huntingdonshire District Council is responsible for ensuring that –

- its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; and
- public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In carrying out these duties, Members and employees are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for governance of the Council's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at their disposal. To that end, the Council has approved and adopted a Code of Governance, which reflects the principles and requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/Society of Local Authorities Chief Executives ("CIPFA/SOLACE"). The Code is published on the Council's website at

<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Councils%20and%20Democracy/Council/Page/Code%20of%20Corporate%20Governance.aspx>

and hard copies are available on request from the Policy & Strategic Services Manager.

The Code describes the way in which the Council will carry out its functions and how it complies with the principles of openness, integrity and accountability. The Code applies to elected Members and employees alike, and they are reflected in the Council's working procedures and processes in the interests of establishing and maintaining public confidence.

The Council's Code of Governance recognises that effective governance is achieved through the following **core principles**:

- focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for Huntingdonshire.
- Members and employees working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
- promoting the values of the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
- developing the capacity and capability of Members and employees to be effective.
- engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

In the Code these six core principles have a number of **supporting principles** which, in turn, have **specific requirements**. These principles and requirements apply across the work of the Council and define the Governance Framework.

The Governance Framework

A Governance Framework has been in place for the year ended 31st March 2010 and up to and including the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

The Council's powers and duties of Council, Committees and Panels require the Corporate Governance Panel (among other things) to –

- ensure that the Council has a sound system of internal Audit which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions including arrangements for the management of risk; and
- consider the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and approve the annual statement in that respect.

In turn the Council's Head of Law, Property & Governance and Monitoring Officer has been given responsibility for –

- overseeing the implementation and monitoring the operation of the Code;
- reviewing the operation of the Code in practice; and
- reviewing and reporting to the Corporate Governance Panel on compliance with the Code and any changes that may be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness in practice.

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the authority's governance arrangements are as follows:

1. Communicating vision and purpose

The Council has in place a Community Strategy, "Growing Our Communities", which sets out a vision, shared with partners, for Huntingdonshire, published on the Council's website at

http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/HDCCMS/Documents/Business%20and%20Economic%20Development%20Documents/Huntingdonshire%20Strategic%20Partnership/hps1017_-_sustainable_community_strategy_booklet_web.pdf

The Strategy was reviewed and re-adopted by the Council in September 2008. In addition the Council's Corporate Plan, "Growing Success", sets out our vision and our purpose in the context of the Community Strategy. The Council has recently reviewed "Growing Success" by identifying and prioritising community and Council objectives, which will help to achieve the vision. In turn, both "Growing Our

Communities” and “Growing Success” are supported by a series of Plans and policies to achieve the vision and aims for Huntingdonshire. These Plans are supported by a comprehensive performance management framework which monitors the achievement of targets and measures.

The Council’s Communications & Marketing and Consultation & Engagement Strategies are used to promote and guide communications and engagement with local residents and to ensure that the vision and supporting plans are shared with local residents and other stakeholders. Extensive consultation and engagement has been used to develop the plans and regular surveys are carried out to gauge satisfaction with the achievement of the vision.

2. Roles & responsibilities

The Council’s Constitution provides a comprehensive explanation of the Council’s administrative and managerial processes. Designed to illustrate the statutory division between executive and non-executive roles and responsibilities within the Council, the Constitution also defines the relationship between the Council and local residents by means of a series of articles, procedure rules and codes of practice.

Articles and tables list the functions of the Executive, Scrutiny and Standards Committee arrangements as defined by the Local Government Act 2000 and explain how the Council has delegated its non-executive decision making to Committees and Panels. The role of Statutory Officers is defined, together with the management structure of the authority, and the Scheme of Delegation contains a comprehensive summary of all decision making powers delegated to Officers by the executive and non-executive parts of the Council. A series of procedure rules demonstrate clearly the inter-relationship between those various elements.

A Member-led cross party review of the Council’s democratic arrangements was undertaken in 2008/09 that evaluated the Council’s performance since the adoption of the current structure, the implications of change necessitated by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the emerging themes of strengthening local democracy in recent Government consultation documents and guidance.

The review concluded that the existing structure had worked well since its inception and the principles of the executive/scrutiny split had become embedded in the organisation. Nevertheless, the Council agreed various changes to promote local democracy and community engagement in the process, involving –

- a new look to Council meetings with headline debates, Cabinet ‘white paper’ proposals, monitoring of LAA performance, public question time and evening meetings;
- public consultation on a move to an executive leader in 2011;
- restructuring of the role of the Deputy Leader to improve support for the Leader and other executive councillors;

- a move to evening Cabinet meetings to assist executive councillors in full time employment;
- a refocusing of overview and scrutiny to enhance scrutiny of LSP priorities, partners and general well-being;
- co-option of independent persons to Overview and Scrutiny Panels to promote community engagement and widen experience;
- establishment of neighbourhood forums to promote community local democracy and community engagement;
- role descriptions for holders of special responsibility allowances, all councillors and group leaders; and
- signing of the IDeA Member Development Charter to enhance support for elected councillors.

A review of the changes to the Council's democratic structure, which have been in place for over a year, has recently been initiated.

Cabinet

Chaired by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet has responsibility for all executive functions of the authority. Having moved to monthly evening meetings following the review of the democratic structure, the Cabinet is now better placed to consider reports and recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Panels that meet earlier in the month.

Portfolios of executive responsibilities are allocated by the Leader to seven executive councillors with the Deputy Leader now concentrating on a supportive function with specific responsibility for Member development and achievement of the IDeA Member Development Charter.

Key decisions, defined as issues involving income/expenditure of £50,000 plus or that affect two of more wards, are listed in a Forward Plan publicised four months in advance with executive decisions published within three days to facilitate potential call-in by scrutiny.

The arrangements for delegated decision making, the conduct of business at meetings etc. are defined in Cabinet procedure rules contained in the Council's constitution.

Overview & Scrutiny Panels

The Council has appointed 3 Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being, Environmental Well-Being, and Economic Well-Being) which discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to the matters set out in Article 6 of the constitution. The composition of the three Panels reflect the three main principles of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Within their terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels will:-

- review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any Joint Committee in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- review the performance of the Council and the achievement of performance indicators and targets;
- scrutinise the performance of partnerships in relation to LAA targets and crime and disorder;
- exercise the Councillor "call for action" arrangements;
- consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- exercise the right of call-in, for reconsideration, of decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet or a key decision made by an Officer.

An annual report of the activities of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels for 2009/10 was completed and approved by the Panels in June. It has been publicised in the Council's website and sent to interested parties

Corporate Governance Panel

The Council has established a Corporate Governance Panel to consider the issues of audit, governance and finance including:

- ensuring that the financial management of the Council is adequate and effective;
- approving the Council's statement of accounts;
- ensuring that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions including arrangements for the management of risk;
- considering the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and approving the annual statement in that respect;
- overall responsibility within the Council for ensuring that the assurance framework is in place and operating effectively
- determination of the Council's feedback procedure, monitoring compliance with the procedure, compensatory payments to complainants and formulation of recommendations to the Cabinet or Council on any action to be taken as a consequence; and
- receiving and considering the external auditor's reports including the Annual Report to those charged with Governance and the Annual Audit Letter.

3. Codes of conduct defining standards of behaviour

A Members' Code of Conduct provides the statutory framework for the ethical conduct and behaviour of Members of the Council and persons appointed or co-opted to Committees. Training is provided by the Monitoring Officer to ensure

Members are thoroughly aware of the standards expected of them and to embed the principles set out in the Code into the culture of the Council.

Notwithstanding the absence of a statutory model, an Employees' Code of Conduct defines the behaviour that the Council expects of its employees, with training provided as part of the induction process and annual reminders issued to both Members and employees of the need to register any new or changed interests.

A protocol for relations between Members and employees establishes the principles to be observed in the relationships at both an individual level and between executive and non-executive bodies and employees. A further protocol on community leadership by Members and Codes of Good Practice for both planning and licensing explain to Members the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them in carrying out their constituency and quasi-judicial decision making roles. Published on the Council's Internet and Intranet, the Codes and protocols are supplemented by training to ensure a thorough understanding and compliance with the principles and standards that they establish.

Responsibility for receiving complaints about standards of behaviour and carrying out the preliminary assessment of what action, if any, is required, transferred from the Standards Board for England to local authority Standards Committees in May 2008. Since May 2008 the monitoring officer has received and dealt with 32 complaints (five cases have involved District Councillors and the remainder Parish Councillors) of which 5 were referred for further investigation. No action was necessary in 18 cases and the remainder were referred to the monitoring officer for other action, such as training and the submission of an apology to the complainant. The Council has made the necessary changes to its Constitution and put in place the appropriate procedures to deal with this additional responsibility.

Allowances

Councillors' allowances are set by the Council based on the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel as required by the legislation. Allowances can be fixed for a 4 year period with an agreed formula to deal with annual adjustments without the need for further review. Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1021) refers. The Council's allowances were set by the Council in February 2007 to come into effect in May of that year. A further review by the Independent Remuneration Panel is therefore not required until 2011.

During the year £379,000 was paid as allowances to 52 Councillors, the basic allowance being £4,235.04 per annum. In addition Councillors can claim a limited range of travel and sundry expenses. This amounted to £23,886.23 in the year. Therefore, a total of £402,886.23 was paid during the year

The Chief Executive and Directors incurred travel and subsistence costs in the course of their duties. No taxable expenses were reimbursed. Car fuel costs were reimbursed at rates ranging between 10p & 17p per mile. In total £10,600 of expenses were reimbursed.

4. Review of the Constitution

The Council's Constitution, which incorporates the Council procedure rules (Standing Orders), Code of Financial Management (financial regulations), Code of Procurement (Standing Orders as to Contracts) etc., is reviewed formally at biennial intervals, with an opportunity provided for both the executive and non-executive, as well as individual Members and employees, to reflect on its robustness and operation in practice over the previous two years. Interim changes may be made from time to time that are necessitated by legislative developments, reviews of working practices or alteration to decision making responsibilities. Any such change is communicated by updating the Constitution both electronically on the Internet and Intranet and in hard copy. A biennial review of the constitution was undertaken in 2009, together with a Member led review of the Council's democratic arrangements which resulted in a number of changes.

5. Capacity and Capability

Members

The Council has signed the IDeA Member Development Charter and is preparing an Action Plan to achieve Charter status. Role descriptions have been introduced for all Executive Councillors, other Councillors in receipt of special responsibility allowances, political group leaders and Ward Councillors

A training and development programme has been designed for Members that embraces the professional, organisational and behavioural knowledge and skills that they require to enable them to perform their roles both internally and within the community. Skills and needs audits are undertaken periodically and personal development plans will be prepared for individual Members. A record of all training undertaken is held on Members' individual files. Training is provided both internally by senior management and by external consultants and specialists.

A Members' induction scheme is in place for new Members. Specific training is provided for Members who sit on the –

Licensing Committee/Panel
Development Management Panel
Standards Committee
Overview & Scrutiny Panels
Corporate Governance Panel.

Employees

The Council is committed to developing the skills of employees to enable roles to be carried out effectively and enhance career progression. Skills of employees are assessed as part of the annual appraisal process and an appropriate personal training and development plan is agreed. In addition corporate training programs

such as Management and Leadership, Equality and Diversity, and Health and Safety training are in place.

6. Treasury Management

Treasury Management is the process by which the Council:

- ensures it has sufficient cash to meet its day-to-day obligations
- borrows when necessary to fund capital expenditure, including borrowing in advance when rates are considered to be low
- invests any surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy provides clear objectives for the management of its borrowing and investments. It emphasises the need for effective management and control of risk. The Strategy for 2010/11 was approved in January 2010

Risks associated with investments

The risk is managed by:

High credit quality:

- Investing in institutions with a high credit quality which takes into account factors in addition to credit ratings including credit default swap prices
- Specifying the minimum credit rating of the counterparty in the value of the investment according to the size even though many do not have a credit rating because the regulatory framework means that deposits from local authorities would be paid before retail deposits
- Reacting immediately to any changes to credit ratings which often results in the counterparty being removed from the approved list

Spreading the risk

- Spreading the investments by counterparty taking into account where institutions are linked to the same group
- By having country limits
- By imposing limits for non-specified investments (time deposits of more than one year and corporate bonds)

Duration of investments

- A maximum duration of 5 years

Additional Restrictions

In order to manage risk whilst maintaining acceptable returns the following additional limitations have been introduced:

- Even if borrowing rates appear to be particularly good value compared with current and expected trends, any additional forward borrowing to finance the Council's MTP will only be undertaken after considering how acceptably safe counterparties would be identified to cover the investment of such sums pending their use.
- Maximum use will be taken of investment call accounts, where we can recover our funds in less than 24 hours, with highly rated banks as long as their rates continue to be reasonable.

Budget

The Council needs to achieve £8 million savings that our medium term financial plan suggests is required by 2014/15. A Budget Plan is being implemented which has identified service efficiency savings and potential income through increased charges.

A resident, stakeholder and staff budget consultation exercise has been undertaken throughout July and August, via face to face interviews, a survey on our web site and paper based surveys at Library's, Customer Service Centres and Leisure Centres. The results will be considered by Chief Officer Management Team and Members in this Autumn.

A voluntary redundancy scheme is currently being developed and will be open to all members of staff from September 2010

7. Internal Audit

Internal audit work is undertaken in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Audit Practice. The Director of Commerce & Technology is accountable for the Council's internal audit arrangements. A risk-based strategic plan detailing the risks and activities of the Council is prepared, from which the annual audit plan is drawn. Written reports are prepared for all audits: these include an opinion on the degree of risk perceived and the assurance that can be obtained from the system. An annual report is submitted to the Corporate Governance Panel by the Internal Audit & Risk Manager in which he expresses his opinion on the Council's internal control environment based upon the work the internal audit service has completed.

In respect of the 12 month period ending 31st August 2010, the opinion expressed was that the "Council's internal control environment and systems of internal control provide limited assurance over the effective exercise of its functions. In respect of these systems that refer to, or are substantially related to, internal financial control, the controls operated by management are adequate"

8. Whistleblowing and Benefit Fraud

A Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure have been adopted, and are available on the Council's Website and Intranet. They are reviewed annually and publicised widely. A 'phone line and 'web form' are available for complainants' use at all times.

The Fraud Team undertakes investigation of allegedly fraudulent applications for housing and council tax benefit. This work complies with various legislative requirements. In addition the team also conduct investigations into fraudulent housing applications, council tax discounts and exemptions made by local taxation customers.

The Council participate in the National Fraud Initiative and a summary of the outcomes of the latest data matching exercise was reported to the Corporate Governance Panel in December 2009.

9. Complaints Procedure

The Council has adopted a feedback procedure which is in place to identify and deal with failure in service delivery. Complaints, or feedback to help service improvement, can be made in person at the Council offices, via telephone, fax, e-mail or the Council's website.

The revised procedure has been in place for over a year. In that period there has been an increase in the number of complaints that the Council receives and complainants now tend to pursue their complaints further through the process. There is no suggestion that there are more service failures as the number of complaints examined by the Ombudsman which have lead to a local settlement remains negligible and no findings of maladministration have been found. There are, nevertheless, greater demands on senior managers to respond to complaints.

10. RIPA and FOI

A policy has been adopted by the Council dealing with covert surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and is published on the intranet. A group of officers has been established and meets on a regular basis to discuss surveillance issues and appropriate training is provided to staff and members. The 3rd Inspection Report of the Office of Surveillance Commissioners, published in June 2008 described the Council's use of RIPA as 'exemplary'.

11. Risk Management

The Council maintains a risk register which contains the significant corporate and operational risks which are likely to affect the achievement of corporate objectives. The register is reviewed by the Risk Management Group, who report to the Chief

Officers' Management Team and the Corporate Governance Panel. The Cabinet are responsible for formally deciding the acceptability of the highest levels of residual risk or if additional mitigation is required. Amendments to the risk management strategy were approved in December 2009. A risk register is in place which is used to inform the internal audit plan and the review of the system of internal audit. Regular reports on the risks facing the Council are reported to the Corporate Governance Panel.

12. Assurance Framework

To ensure that the Council is complying with its Governance arrangements and meeting the requirements of the Code (as set out in the principles, core principles and specific requirements) an Assurance Framework in the form of an annual cycle is in place which includes:

- an annual review of governance arrangements;
- preparation of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS);
- implementation of an action plan associated with the AGS;
- a half yearly review of progress against the action plan;
- continued reference to systems and reporting as necessary to provide assurance and support for good governance; and
- the Audit Manager's annual report and comments by the external auditors and other inspections

This cycle is designed to reflect good practice in delivering a framework of assurance for Members and employees in terms of governance arrangements and to help to ensure accountability and transparency for local people and other stakeholders such as the Council's external auditors and Government inspectors.

The Corporate Governance Panel has overall responsibility within the Council for ensuring that the assurance framework is in place and operating effectively.

13. Assurance

In March 2009 the CGP in taking account of the guidance issued by CIPFA in January 2009 agreed that the annual review of Governance arrangements will include the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit. The system of internal audit provides the framework of assurance necessary to satisfy the Council that the risks to its objectives, and the risks inherent in undertaking its work, have been properly identified and are being managed by controls that are adequately designed and effective in operation.

Sources of assurance can be taken from:

- the Internal Audit Manager's annual opinion on the internal control environment;
- the risk register and assurance on the operation of key controls;

- the Council's performance management framework revised and refreshed in conjunction with a review of the Corporate Plan "Growing Success" in January 2010;
- the consideration and monitoring by the Chief Officers' Management Team of reports and decisions prepared for, and taken by, Cabinet;
- arrangements which have been made to ensure that reports to Members are subject to completion of a template that requires authors to certify that they have had regard to the implications implicit in the report, including legal, financial and risk issues;
- reviews of the Constitution which have included variations to the Council's overview and scrutiny processes;
- the 2008/09 Audit and Inspection Letter from the Audit Commission; and
- the Council's Improvement Plan – incorporating the actions from external audits.

14. Governance of Partnerships

Increasingly the Council is seeking to promote joint working and partnership to deliver local objectives, improve efficiency and achieve savings. A Partnership evaluation framework, including the criteria for the good governance of partnerships identified by the Audit Commission report "Governing Partnerships: Bridging the Accountability Gap" has been developed. The framework balances the need for appropriate governance of partnerships which reflect their cycle of development to ensure that innovation and new ways of working are not stifled by over-burdensome procedures, while at the same time ensuring that arrangements exist which are compatible with the governance needs of the Council. Using the framework the Council has undertaken an initial assessment of partnerships and a (3 year) programme is being implemented to continuously review and develop strategic and operational partnerships.

In addition the Council is actively involved in developing governance of County-wide partnerships, supporting the delivery of a Local Area Agreement (LAA). There is a continuing debate and review to ensure that Cambridgeshire Together and supporting structured – the partnership charged with ensuring the LAA - has appropriate governance arrangements.

15. Annual Audit and Inspection Letter: (March 2009)

The Annual Audit & Inspection Letter for 2008/09, provides a summary of our external Auditors (Grant Thornton) assessment of the Council.

The key findings of this letter for the Council to address being; the introduction of accounting under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS); improve contract management arrangements and procurement processes; ensure that its medium term financial planning takes account of the current economic climate and

the likely restrictions in public spending. All these findings are currently being addressed.

The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is available on the Council's website; http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6334B36A-3B71-46E3-B56D-514364A0FE21/0/audit_inspection_letter_march_2009.pdf and from the Head of People, Performance & Partnerships.

External Inspection. In October 2009 the Council were advised, by the Audit Commission, that our Organisational Assessment (part of Comprehensive Area Assessment relating to 2008/09) had been assessed at level 3 'performing well'. The Organisational assessment consisted of two external assessments; the Use of Resources and Managing Performance assessments, both of which are scored on a scale of 1 to 4 and then merged into an Organisational assessment score by the Audit Commission.

The Organisational assessment ceased when the Coalition Government abolished CAA in May of this year

16. Governance Issues Previously Identified

- **Code of Procurement.** There have been a number of occasions during the year where internal audit reviews have identified examples of breaches of the Code of Procurement. Steps will be taken to improve the level of compliance

Progress to date:

Directors reported back to CGP in December 2009 with an action plan. The following items have been delivered against that plan.

- Projected procurement dates have been supplied by managers for current and next year.
 - Revised procurement strategy has been delayed due to the introduction of the E-marketplace but will be completed by end of September.
 - First cycle of modular training completed. Further cycle to commence in November 2010.
 - Procurement Code reviewed and approved by Council.
 - Review of suppliers/groups- categories is a permanent ongoing review. Savings have already resulted on stationery, printing and clothing.
 - Improvements to the Contract Register and the Procurement website have been completed.
 - E-Marketplace up and running for stationery. Further products will be rolled out over the coming months.
- **Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Evaluation.** New guidance has been issued by the Audit Commission to help in the assessment of the Governance arrangements and effectiveness of the Local Strategic Partnerships. Consideration will be given to how this guidance can be implemented in conjunction with the Councils own Partnership framework

Progress to date:

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership regularly looks at performance against the Sustainable Community Strategy and important part of the achievement of the partnership's vision and objectives. Regular quarterly reports are submitted to the partnership and an annual report is currently being prepared. In light of current budget reductions across partner organisations, a review of partnership and the effects on services is currently underway

- **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter recommendations, March 2009**
 - Maintain focus on service performance in order to improve the rate of improvement and tackle areas of comparative under performance; and
 - Develop a stronger focus on outcomes measures

Progress to date:

Performance reports detailing progress against objectives continue to be reported to Chief Officer Management Team, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

A review of targets and measures in our corporate plan "Growing Success" was undertaken with Heads of Service during January 2010 and reported to the Corporate Plan working group in February 2010. The review also included targets and measures at divisional level with the emphasis on outcomes.

Progress against our targets in 'Growing Success' have been published in the September edition of District Wide.

- **Scrutiny Annual Report.** To ensure an Overview and Scrutiny annual report, reflecting their work during 2009/10, is prepared to for publication

Progress to date:

The annual report of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels for 2009/10 was completed and approved by the Panels in June. It has been publicised on the Council's website and sent to interested parties

17. Governance Issues

While generally satisfied with the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements and the internal control environment, as part of continuing efforts to improve governance arrangements the Council has identified the following issues for attention in the forthcoming year –

- Identifying budget savings in order to balance the budget, as identified in the Financial Forecast report which considers the Council position until 2024/2025.
- Complaints – Number of complaints and time taken to resolve.
- The continued need to ensure that the code of Procurement is fully complied with.

- Preparing for any new inspection regime.

During the coming year steps will be taken to address these issues to further enhance the Council's Governance arrangements. In these circumstances we are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation through the Council's Improvement Plan and as part of our next annual review.

Signed: Signed:

Ian Bates
Leader of the Council

David Monks
Chief Executive

I hereby confirm that the Councils Corporate Governance Panel have approved the Governance Statement

Signed: Date:

Councillor T D Sanderson
Chairman of the District Council's Corporate Governance Panel

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September, 2010