

# Conwy County Borough Council Governance Framework 2024

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

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Conwy County Borough Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at Conwy County Borough Council for the year ended 31st March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and statement of accounts.

Conwy County Borough Council is committed to ensuring good governance principles and management practices are adopted in all business activities to ensure public trust.

# Conwy County Borough Council Governance Framework

Corporate Governance comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.

These are the main themes of our approach to governance, and the documents and processes that form the framework.

## Themes

- Behaving with integrity
- Openness and engagement
- Sustainable citizen focused outcomes
- Interventions to achieve the outcomes
- Developing capacity and leadership
- Managing finances and risks
- Accountability and transparency

## Documents

Key documents that are reviewed and produced annually include the following:

- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Annual Report](#)
- [Annual Governance Statement](#)
- [Finance Reports](#)
- [Data Protection Policy \(Internal Intranet\)](#)
- [Asset Management Plan \(Internal Intranet\)](#)
- [Corporate Risk Register](#)
- Delegations from/to Directors
- Service Plans
- Internal/External Audit Protocol
- [Conwy Digital Strategy \(Internal Intranet\)](#)
- [Cyber Resilience Strategy \(Internal Intranet\)](#)
- [Information Governance Framework \(Internal Intranet\)](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#)
- [Members Allowances Scheme](#)
- [Treasury Management Strategy](#)
- [Statement of Accounts](#)
- Service Continuity Plans

Key documents that are reviewed and produced on an ad-hoc basis include the following:

- [Counter Fraud Strategy \(Internal Intranet\)](#)

- [Business Planning Framework](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Community Involvement Strategy](#)
- [Communications & Engagement Strategy](#)
- [Constitution](#)
- [Corporate Procurement Strategy](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Contract Procedure Rules](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Complaints Guidance](#)
- [Inclusive Conwy](#) (our Strategic Equality Plan)
- Financial Regulations
- [Health and Safety Policies](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [People Strategy](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Member/Officer Relations](#)
- Officer Employment Procedure Rules
- [Collaboration Implementation Guidance](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Performance Management Framework](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Record of Decisions](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#) (Internal Intranet)

### **Processes and Regulatory Monitoring:**

- [Governance and Audit Committee](#)
- [Public Services Board](#)
- Budget Accountability Statements
- Corporate Intranet
- Corporate [Learning and Development Plan](#) (Intranet)
- [Standards Committee](#) (Internal Intranet)
- [Council Tax Information](#)
- Customer Feedback Process
- Director of Finance and Resources
- [Data Protection](#) (Intranet)
- Stakeholder Forums
- [Freedom of Information](#)
- Head of Paid Service (CEO)
- Independent Remuneration Panel
- [Inspectorate Reports](#)
- Internal Audit
- Information Governance Group
- Job Descriptions
- Job Evaluation Process
- Law & Governance
- Member Development & induction
- Monitoring Officer
- Managers Forum
- [Conwy Conversation](#)
- [Combined FWP Council Meetings](#)

- Improvement & Audit Group
- Report Review Group (RRG)
- Capital Monitoring Group
- Information Governance Group
- Corporate H&S Process
- [Scrutiny Committees](#)
- Staff Induction
- Staff surveys
- Strategic Leadership Team
- Senior Management Team
- Scheme of delegation
- External web and social media
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)

# Our Strategic Priorities

## Our Vision

Conwy – a progressive County creating opportunity

## Our Values

### The Way We Work

Our values represent the beliefs of our organisation and the expected behaviour from everyone working for Conwy County Borough Council.

Our Values are:

- We care about what we do
- We are fair to all
- We are innovative
- We are team players

Our [Corporate Plan and wellbeing objectives](#)

## Our commitment to good governance

To demonstrate our commitment to good governance we outlined the commitments the Council adheres to, to ensure it is doing the right things in the right way in an open, honest and accountable manner.

1. **We will** clearly set out our objectives in our Corporate Plan.
2. **We will** measure how effective our services are and take action to improve them. We will publish information showing how we are progressing towards our objectives in our Annual Report.
3. **We will** work with other public services to improve services for Conwy.
4. **We will** ensure we make the best use of taxpayers' money by taking prudent financial decisions.
5. **We will** set out in our Constitution who can take which decisions.
6. **We will** behave in ways that are inclusive, and reflect our values and high standards of conduct.
7. **We will** ensure people in the Council making decisions have access to accurate information to help them take decisions in the best interests of the people of Conwy.
8. **We will** record and publish the decisions we take and the reasons for them. Wherever possible, we'll take the most important decisions in public.
9. **We will** carry out scrutiny of our services to make sure they meet our residents' needs.
10. **We will** be sensitive about how we collect and record personal information and safeguard it from misuse.

Each year we self-assess how we are meeting our standards of governance and record this in our Annual Governance Statement. Our external auditors conduct an annual review of the statement.

## **Governance Structures & Responsibilities**

The following bodies and structures fulfil an important role in reviewing and ensuring the effectiveness of governance.

### **The Council**

The Council (all 55 councillors) sets the overall budget and policies. Council meetings are held regularly throughout the year, and debates the different options for important issues facing the County Borough. Council appoints the Leader of the Council; the Leader then appoints the other members of the Cabinet, and allocates Cabinet member responsibilities (portfolios).

### **Chair of the Council**

The Chair is the ceremonial figurehead of the Council.

They chair the debate at full Council meetings and the position is filled by a Council vote.

### **Leader**

They provide leadership to the Council and its political administration. They have overall responsibility for the political management of the Authority, and the delivery of agreed Council priorities, strategies and policies. The Leader appoints the Cabinet and designates portfolios.

### **Cabinet**

The Cabinet makes key decisions, though it can also delegate decisions to individual Cabinet Members, to committees, to officers, joint arrangements or other authorities. The Cabinet has 10 members, including the Leader of the Council and each member has different areas of responsibility or portfolios. Cabinet meets regularly around once or twice a month.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Overview and Scrutiny Committees advise on policies and hold the Cabinet to account on specific issues. Overview and Scrutiny Committees can also review areas of Council activity or matters of wider local concern. There are 4 overview and scrutiny committees which are overseen by the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The other 3 committees are: Economy and Place; Education and Skills; Social Care and Health.

### **Other Committees:**

There are some additional committees that make the Council's regulatory decisions and these are: Planning Committee; Governance and Audit Committee; Licensing Committee. Democratic Services Committee

There is also a Standards Committee to promote high standards of conduct and support councillors to comply with the Code of Conduct.

## **Task and Finish Groups**

Groups can be established to undertake specific, focussed, timed and scoped pieces of work – either policy development or scrutiny reviews. These undertake detailed work and are less formal.

## **Governance & Audit Committee**

This is a statutory committee providing independent assurance on the Council's internal control environment. It is chaired by a lay person. The Committee agrees the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Statement of Accounts; oversees Internal Audit's independence and effectiveness; monitors the effectiveness of value for money arrangements; considers the effectiveness of risk management, including risks of bribery, fraud and corruption and considers External Audit and Inspectors' reports.

## **Regulatory Committees**

The Planning, Governance and Audit, and Licensing Committees make the Council's regulatory decisions.

## **Standards Committees**

A Standards Committee meets to promote high standards of conduct and support councillors to comply with the Code of Conduct.

## **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO has overall management and operational responsibility for the authority (including overall management responsibility for employees).

They provide professional advice to all parties in the decision making process, and a system of recording the Council's decision making process.

The CEO decides how functions are discharged and how officers are organised.

## **Chief Financial Officer (Section 151)**

The Chief Financial Officer has responsibility for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs, as required by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, and has responsibility for overseeing that sound governance arrangements are in place and are embedded in the Authority.

## **Monitoring Officer**

They ensure compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations.

## **Head of Internal Audit**

They provide an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance arrangements. They deliver a programme of risk-based audits, including counter fraud and investigation.

## **Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)**

SLT has a more strategic/tactical role - fed from Cabinet/Senior Management Team (SMT) /individual Heads of Service, it:

- Addresses concerns and issues raised by the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Strategic Director of Social Care and Education, Head of People and Performance, Statutory Head of Education and Head of Environment, Roads and Facilities;
- Considers adverse incident reports (incl. fraud and health and safety);
- Reviews issues emerging from the programme boards;
- Considers grant applications;
- Reviews new posts and mini restructures of less than 10 staff;
- Receives information regarding inspections and performance - information from Improvement and Audit Group prior to submission to SMT;
- Reviews SMT agendas.

## **Senior Management Team (SMT)**

SMT is the primary management team of the Authority and includes the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and all Heads of Service. SMT is responsible for developing, maintaining and implementing the Council's governance, risk and control framework. SMT contributes to the effective corporate management and governance of the Council.

## **Internal Audit**

Provides an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance arrangements. Delivers a programme of risk-based audits, including counter fraud and investigation.

## **Improvement and Audit Group (IAG)**

Provides ongoing review of the effectiveness of the governance framework, monitoring of external regulatory reports and review of risks.

## **External Audit**

Audits and reports on the Council's financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement), providing an opinion on the accounts and use of resources and concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

## **Partnership**

The following bodies and structures fulfil an important role in caring and supporting the needs of people in their area. .

## **Regional Groups**

- North Wales Regional Partnership Board (statutory). This Board is supported by 2 multi -agency formal partnerships: 1. Leadership Group. 2. North Wales Social Services Improvement Collaborative
- Together for Mental Health (multi agency formal partnership)



- North Wales Regional Collaboration Committee (multi agency formal partnership)
- North Wales Economic Ambition Board. (Multi agency formal partnership). This is supported by a Regional Skills Group and the North Wales Regeneration Group
- Local Authority Regional Collaborations (multi agency formal partnership). This includes: Adoption/ Social Care Commissioning and Telecare/ Emergency Planning/ Parking/ Waste and Minerals Planning / Highways Agency.
- North Wales Regional School Improvement Service (GWE) (Local Authority supported by Welsh Government)
- Local Resilience Forum (multi agency formal partnership)
- North Wales Public Sector Equalities Network (multi agency formal partnership)
- Contest Boards

## Sub Regional Groups

There are 3 North Wales Public Services Boards (PSBs):

- Wrexham and Flintshire PSB;
- Conwy and Denbighshire PSB;
- Anglesey and Gwynedd PSB.

The Conwy and Denbighshire PSB is supported by numerous Conwy local partnerships, by Denbighshire local partnerships, and by joint Conwy and Denbighshire local partnerships.

### Conwy Local Partnerships

- Conwy Local Action Group (statutory)
- Conwy People's Partnership (multi agency formal partnership)
- Conwy Strategic Housing Partnership (multi agency formal partnership)
- Third Sector Partnership (multi agency formal partnership)
- Destination Management Group (multi agency formal partnership)

### Denbighshire local partnerships

- Denbighshire Local Action Group (statutory)
- Denbighshire Carers Strategy Group (multi agency formal partnership)
- Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB Partnership (multi agency formal partnership)
- Rhyl Regeneration (multi agency formal partnership)
- Third Sector Partnership Group (multi agency formal partnership)
- Children, Young People and Families Partnership (multi agency formal partnership)
- Community Led Innovation Forum (multi agency formal partnership)
- Ageing Well in Denbighshire (multi agency formal partnership)

### Joint Conwy and Denbighshire local partnerships

- Youth Justice Service (statutory)
- Safeguarding Children Delivery Group (statutory)
- Safeguarding Adults Delivery Group (statutory)
- Community Safety Partnership (statutory)
- Integrated Services Board (multi agency formal partnership)

- Local Implementation Team (multi agency formal partnership)

## CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Corporate Governance comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.

Behaving with Integrity

Openness & Engagement

Sustainable Citizen Focused Outcomes

Interventions to achieve the outcomes

Developing Capacity & Leadership

Managing Finances and Risks

Accountability and Transparency

Key Documents: Annual Review/ Production

Key Documents: Ad-hoc Review/ Production

Processes / Regulatory Monitoring

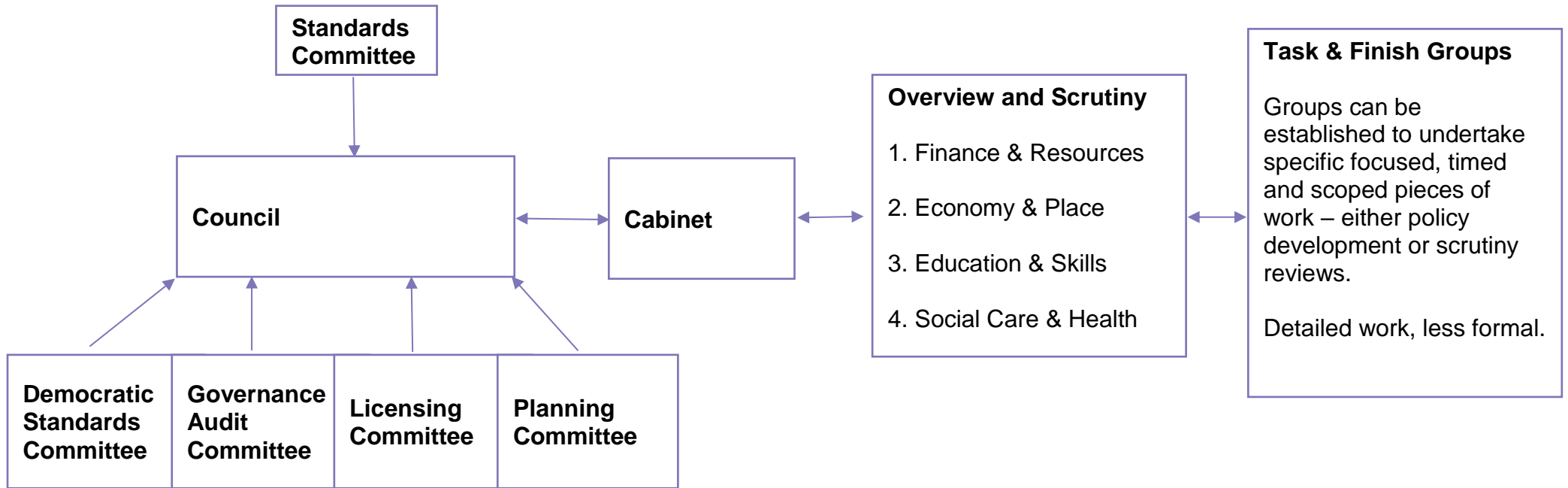
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## Political and Democratic Arrangements



# Partnership Boards

KEY: Statutory Partnership Multi-Agency Formal Partnership Informal Partnerships Local Authority: Supported by WG Regional Sub-regional → Reporting / Communication

