

Annual Governance Statement – 2024/25

Executive Summary

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) looks at how effective our governance has been in 2024/25 and looks forward to possible improvements and priorities for 2025/26.

Assurance

The Corporate Governance arrangements of the Council are considered to be acceptable based on the 'High' assurance level determined by the Council's Internal Audit Review of AGS and Corporate Governance.

It is important that a Governance Statement includes an evaluation and conclusion and provides a clear judgement on whether the governance arrangements outlined are fit for purpose.

To enable this judgement the Council's Internal Audit service conducted a review of our arrangements against the adopted standards. (see below).

| Findings of Carmarthenshire CC's Internal Audit Review of AGS and Corporate Governance | |
|---|---|
| Post Review Assurance Level | Description for Assurance Level |
| High | A sound system of internal control exists, is operating effectively and is being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited. |
| Internal Audit found no fundamental control issues to be addressed as a high priority. | |

Scope of Responsibility: Corporate Framework and Strategy

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, whilst also ensuring that public money is safeguarded, accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively so as to secure continuous improvement.

Below is a table outlining the measures and governance responsibilities undertaken by the Authority to ensure that these standards are upheld:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Corporate Governance Group | Comprising key Officers and 2 Cabinet Members, the Corporate Governance Group is in place to inform and monitor progress on issues affecting Governance, including the Code of Corporate Governance , which was approved by Council in June 2012 and most recently updated in July 2021. |
| CIPFA/SOLACE Framework | 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' (Guidance Notes for Welsh Authorities 2016 Edition – Published September 2016). This framework identifies 7 key principles of good governance which complement the Well-being of Future Generations Act requirements. The Authority's Code of CG recognises policies and processes in line with the 7 principles adopted in the framework. |

A Forward Look and Action Plan: Challenges and Priorities

In summary:

Achievements

- The Corporate Governance arrangements of the Council were deemed acceptable, based on the 'High' assurance level determined by an Internal Audit Review, with a sound system of internal control operating effectively.
- The Internal Audit found no fundamental control issues to be addressed as a high priority.
- **Principle A – Integrity and Values**
 - The Standards Committee maintained high standards of conduct and provided training on the Code of Conduct to County Councillors and Town and Community Councils
 - The Council's Constitution was kept under constant review to ensure transparency of governance, accountability, and decision-making
- **Principle C – Making a Difference** - The Council's business planning processes were fully aligned to the Corporate Strategy Well-being Objectives, Thematic and Service priorities
- **Principle E – Valuing our people; engaging, leading, and supporting** - The Council retained the Corporate Health Standard Platinum recognition in March 2023

Improvements

- **Principle B – Openness and Engagement**
 - The Council introduced a new Complaints Management Officer role to support the management of responses, with an initial focus on Stage 2 complaints
 - The Council's Involvement Strategy was approved by Cabinet in April 2025
 - The Council's Communication Plan was aligned with the new Corporate Strategy and Well-being Objectives
- **Principle F – Managing Risks, Performance, and Finance**
 - The Council's Risk Management Strategy was reviewed and updated, with recommendations for improvement and progress
 - The Council's recruitment system was updated, and training was provided to ensure streamlined recruitment processes

Focus for the Next Financial Year

- **Principle C – Making a Difference** - The Council will continue to promote the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the sustainable development principle
- **Principle D – Making sure we achieve what we set out to do**
 - The Council will continue to enhance the use of information and intelligence from a range of sources to inform quarterly Performance Management Monitoring Reports
 - The Council will develop the Corporate Data Suite to support the Corporate Strategy for 2022-2027 and key policy areas
 - The Council will host and respond to the findings of the Carmarthenshire Panel Performance Assessment in line with the Statutory Guidelines.

- **Principle F – Managing Risks, Performance, and Finance**
 - Medium-Term Financial Planning - need to do further work on aligning with Transformation Strategy and Corporate Strategy
- **Principle G – Good transparency and accountability** - The Council will ensure a robust approach to Cyber security and sustainable solutions for Information Governance

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the Governance issues that need to be considered and addressed during the next 12 months to further enhance our Governance arrangements.

To view the full Annual Governance Statement please click [here](#).