

## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2008-09**

Corporate Director (Resources)

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the progress in developing the Annual Governance Statement for 2008/09 and report the current draft statement.
- 1.2 The preparation and publication of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is a statutory requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The Council is required to “conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control” and to prepare a statement on internal control “in accordance with proper practices”.

### **2 Recommendations/for decision**

- 2.1 The committee is requested to discuss and comment upon the initial draft statement including the areas for improvement.

### **3 Supporting information**

- 3.1 The timetable for the production of the Annual Governance Statement has been brought forward to meet the statutory requirements of the production of the Council’s Annual Accounts. However as some of the supporting information needed to complete the statement has not yet been finalised (see paragraph 3.3) the attached statement is only a draft.
- 3.2 The Annual Governance Statement draws upon the management and internal control framework of the Council especially the work of internal and external audit and the Council’s risk management framework. In particular the independent report of the Council’s Audit Manager is a significant factor in determining the position to be reported.
- 3.3 The other source of assurance is the internal control self assessments that are completed annually by Heads of Service. The deadline for completion of these is 13 March 2009. Any significant issues arising from these will be included in the final Annual Governance Statement and reported verbally at the meeting.

### **4 Options considered**

- 4.1 None – this is a statutory requirement.

### **5 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To comply with legislation

### **6 Resource implications**

- 6.1 Completion of the AGS will be resourced from within existing budgets.

### **7 Response to Key Aims and Objectives**

- 7.1 The AGS is an integral part of AVDC’s annual accounts and requires formal consideration and reporting at Committee.

Contact Officer  
Background Documents

Val Hinkins Audit Manager  
Draft Annual Governance Statement (attached)

## **Annual Governance Statement**

### **1. Scope of responsibility**

- 1.1. Aylesbury Vale District 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. Aylesbury Vale District Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2. In discharging this overall responsibility, Aylesbury Vale District Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. Aylesbury Vale District Council's arrangements for ensuring good Corporate Governance are embedded in its constitution, policies and procedures. It has not approved and adopted a separate single code of corporate governance. However the principles to which the Council operates are intended to be consistent with those contained in the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. Copies of the Council's principal policies and codes of practice can be consulted on its web site. ([www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk)) A list of the more significant documents is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.4. This Annual Governance Statement explains how Aylesbury Vale District Council has complied with the principles of corporate governance and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) [England] Regulations 2006 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

### **2. The purpose of the governance framework**

- 2.1. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
- 2.2. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risk to the achievement of Aylesbury Vale District Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the

likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

### 3. The governance framework

- 3.1. The governance framework has been in place at Aylesbury Vale District Council for the year ended 31 March 2009 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Governance Report and Statement of Accounts.

The following paragraphs include the key elements of the governance framework:

#### 3.2. **Identifying, communicating and reviewing the Council's vision and outcomes**

- 3.2.1. A new corporate plan was published at the beginning of 2008/09. An article about the new aims and objectives for the district was included in the July 2008 issue of District Link, the resident magazine.
- 3.2.2. Workshops for staff were held in June 2008 to communicate the new aims and objectives. These workshops were also used to help develop a new set of values for the council.

*[Add in section explaining how the values are being rolled]*

*[Add in paragraph explaining there may be a minor 'refresh' of the Corporate Plan objectives during]*

*[Add in something on LAA targets and priorities]*

#### 3.3. **Measuring the quality of services for users and value for money**

- 3.3.1. The Business Transformation Programme was revised in 07/08 and projects identified which would deliver improved customer value and widen access channels for a range of services. A major focus for this programme is a series of service Reviews. These follow the principles of the Vanguard organisation which promotes systems and lean thinking and designing operational models around customer demand to reduce wasted effort and processing time.
- 3.3.2. In 2008/09 Vanguard reviews for Parking Services and Benefits were completed. Both reviews have resulted in improvements to the customer experience as well as making efficiency savings. Further reviews are ongoing in other areas and will be reported in 2009/10.
- 3.3.3. Project Based Activity – in 2007/08 the council set up a Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to oversee the evaluation of project proposals and the allocation of funding, in particular for capital financing. Their first task was to undertake a complete review and restructuring of the Council's capital programme. This first checked that all items complied with AVDC's corporate objectives. Business case validity, contribution to service development and affordability were also then assessed for each project. A

much changed capital programme resulted and has now been adopted by Council. The SIB will continue to manage capital investment in projects and ensure proper evaluation of new proposals.

- 3.3.4. The Council has a Procurement Strategy and a set of Contract Procedure Rules which were updated and came into effect on 1 January 2007. The strategy sets out the framework for how goods, works and services are procured. The strategy is in line with the Council's aims and objectives and principles of best value.
- 3.3.5. Scrutiny is central to the decision making processes of the Council and each Scrutiny Committee produces an annual report of its work. Scrutiny is primarily concerned with the development of Council policy and with holding the executive to account for improving services for people in Aylesbury Vale. The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee received a report in November 2008 which outlined how customer opinion and satisfaction is currently measured in AVDC. An internal audit report on the coordination of customer consultation is due to be reported back to Scrutiny in Spring 2009.
- 3.3.6. Benchmarking takes place to compare costs and quality of services with other authorities including those that have a similar geographical spread. Benchmarking reports are sent to Heads of Service.

#### **3.4. Roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers**

- 3.4.1. The Council's Constitution sets out the roles of and relationships between the full Council, the Cabinet and Scrutiny and other Committees in the policy and decision making process and sets out their legal requirements. It also sets out a record of what responsibility each Council body or individual has for particular types of decisions or for decisions relating to particular areas or functions. The Constitution requires that all decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council will be made in accordance with the principles set out in the Constitution.
- 3.4.2. The Constitution also sets out how the public can access the decision making process and the Cabinet's Forward Plan of decisions sets out what consultation will be undertaken before a decision is taken and with whom. Many of the responsibilities of the Council and its committees require statutory consultation to precede a decision being taken.
- 3.4.3. The Constitution was subject to review during 2007/08 with refinements approved by Council at its meeting in March 2008.

#### **3.5. The standards of behaviour for members and staff**

- 3.5.1. Member behaviours are governed by a code of conduct which is set out in the Constitution. A revised code of conduct was adopted by the Council in 2007. All members of the Council have signed an undertaking to abide by its provisions and completed a register of their personal interests. Copies of guidance produced by the Standards Board for England on the revised code have been provided to every member

and they have also received training from the monitoring officer. Specific training has been provided for members of regulatory committees on the code requirements for declaring interests

- 3.5.2. The Constitution also includes protocols covering councillor/officer relations, Member involvement in commercial transactions and a Members planning code of good practice. Each of these protocols have been revised in 2008 in light of the revised code of conduct.

### **3.6. Standing orders, Financial Regulations and Schemes of Delegation**

- 3.6.1. The constitution sets out the scheme of delegation and the Contract Procedure Rules and guidance.
- 3.6.2. Financial procedure notes and manuals are checked at key financial audits.

### **3.7. Role of the Audit Committee**

- 3.7.1. The Audit Committee was created as a full committee of the Council after the local government elections held in May 2007. Its terms of reference, structure, composition and work programme have been developed with reference to the guidance issued by CIPFA in 2005, "Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities".

### **3.8. Compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedure**

- 3.8.1. Ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations involves a range of measures which include:
- Notification of changes in the law, regulations and practice to Directorates;
  - Awareness, understanding and training carried out by internal officers and external experts;
  - The drawing up and circulation of guidance and advice on key procedures, policies and practices;
  - Proactive monitoring of compliance by relevant key officers including the Section 151 Officer (Head of Finance) and the Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal Services).
- 3.8.2. Compliance with the new or revised policies is monitored by the relevant key officers and is incorporated in the Internal Control Checklist completed by each Directorate.
- 3.8.3. Internal Audit reviews compliance and outstanding issues are reported to Audit Committee. The Probity Group (see section 4.8.4) looks at emerging issues and non-compliance from any source.
- 3.8.4. Under Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Monitoring Officer is required to report to the Council where, in his/her opinion, a proposal, decision or omission by the Council, its Members or Officers is or is likely to be unlawful and also to report on any investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman.

It has not been necessary for the Monitoring Officer to issue a formal report for the year 2008/09.

- 3.8.5. The Section 151 officer also has a legal responsibility to issue formal reports if they have particular concerns about the financial arrangements or situation of the Council. No such formal reports have been issued during the 2008/09 financial year.

### **3.9. Risk Management Arrangements**

- 3.9.1. The Council has in place a process for identifying, assessing, managing and reviewing the key areas of risk and uncertainty that could impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and service priorities. Risk management is an integral part of the service and budget planning process.
- 3.9.2. There are risk registers in place for all services and major projects and these are updated on a quarterly basis.
- 3.9.3. The critical and high risks to the achievement of the Corporate Plan are now included in the Quarterly Performance Digest to Scrutiny committees.
- 3.9.4. The Audit committee receive a regular briefing on corporate and major project risks.

### **3.10. Whistle-blowing and Complaints procedures**

- 3.10.1. The Contract Regulations require officers preparing contracts to consider including references to AVDC's Confidential Reporting Policy. Copies of the policy itself are available on the AVDC web site and are provided to staff when they join the Council.
- 3.10.2. There is a Customer Compliments/Complaints Procedure which includes a publication for the public which explains the process. There are also detailed procedures for staff who are dealing with a complaint. Complaints about Members are monitored centrally and reported to the Standards Committee every six months.
- 3.10.3. The Standards Committee considers any complaints made against councillors relating to breaches of the code of conduct. Details of how to make a complaint and the committee's procedure for dealing with member complaints are available on the Council's website.
- 3.10.4.

### **3.11. Member and Officer Development needs**

- 3.11.1. A Programme of training and induction for newly elected members was implemented following the elections in May 2007. Training and development in 2008/09 has focused mainly on inhouse seminars to keep members acquainted with key issues. Consideration is being given to a fresh approach to elected member development in 2009/10.
- 3.11.2. All staff, including Directors and Heads of Service development needs are identified through the appraisal process. There is a specific set of competencies for Heads of Service.

*Add in reference to proposed new internal leadership development programme*

3.11.3. The training and development programme recognises the specific needs of senior managers. There is a programme of training courses which includes participation in the MKOB Strategic Leadership Programme

### **3.12. Communication and Consultation with the public and other stakeholders**

3.12.1. The Council's Community Involvement and Consultation Strategy was updated in July 2007. This sets out how the Council will engage with the community and stakeholders.

3.12.2. The Communication and Marketing Service takes the lead in meeting the Council's consultation targets as specified by the Government as well as co-ordinating, supporting and acting as a central consultation point for specialist advice and quality control.

3.12.3. The Council uses a number of channels to both consult and communicate with the community and other stakeholders. Consultation methods range from quantitative self-completion questionnaires to focus groups depending on the target audience and the objectives of each consultation project. Regular communication channels include the residents' magazine delivered to all households, a proactive media relations programme (radio, TV, newspapers), parish and community noticeboards, and information stands in 60 locations throughout the district. The Council's website is continually expanding both in its content and its functionality. The use of electronic and digital communication channels are now being introduced by the council, including the use of text messaging and web casting.

3.12.4. The government's new Place survey was sent out to AVDC residents at the end of September 2008. The final results are still to be published by the Audit Commission.

### **3.13. Governance Arrangements for Partnerships**

3.13.1. Article 1 of the constitution commits the Council to providing community leadership in partnership with local people and businesses and effective and transparent decision-making; and to improving the delivery of services in consultation with the community. The Council has identified its significant partnerships and there are appropriate governance arrangements in place. A Partnership Protocol was agreed by Corporate Team in September 2007 and a Partnership Evaluation tool has been designed for reviewing performance of partnerships on an annual basis.

3.13.2. The annual review was completed in January 2009. A report to Corporate Team highlighted that the sharing of information with members about the work of the partnerships was an issue to be addressed.

## **4. Review of effectiveness**

4.1. Aylesbury Vale District Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of

internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

4.2. The Review of Effectiveness has to consider the following areas:

- The authority
- The executive
- The audit committee / overview and scrutiny committees / risk management committee
- The standards committee
- Internal audit
- Other explicit review / assurance mechanisms

#### 4.3. **The Authority**

4.3.1. Aylesbury Vale District Council has adopted *the Cabinet* model of political management under the Local Government Act 2000. Ultimate authority rests with the Council meeting as a corporate body, but the responsibility for policy in specific areas is delegated to Cabinet and separate Committees. At the full Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 the Council formally approved the appointment of Cabinet Members and creation of full Committees. It also adopted the Scheme of Delegation. This meeting also approved the arrangements for allocating seats to political groups on all Committees.

4.3.2. Minutes and papers for all Council and Committee meetings are in the public domain and are freely available on the Council's web site.

4.3.3. To encourage participation and accountability one hour is set aside for questions from members at every full ordinary Council meeting.

#### 4.4. **The Executive**

4.4.1. Operational Management of the Council is a partnership between the Cabinet and the Corporate Board.

4.4.2. Formal Cabinet meetings are held monthly and the papers and Minutes are made available to the public on the AVDC web site. Time is set aside for questions from members at the start of every Cabinet meeting. The scheme of delegation sets out the areas for which each Cabinet post holder is responsible. Cabinet Members provide quarterly reports on their own areas to all members.

4.4.3. Regular informal Cabinet briefing sessions are held approximately once a fortnight at which the Corporate Team meet with the Cabinet and discuss Council business. Close working relationships are maintained as the Leader's, Cabinet Members' and Chief Executive's offices are all located close to each other.



- 4.4.4. The Corporate Board consists of the Chief Executive, the two Directors (these three are collectively known as Corporate Team) and Heads of Service. They meet fortnightly.
- 4.4.5. Officers reporting to Heads of Service or Directors are involved in Management Forum meetings. Where required, full staff meetings are also arranged to inform all employees of significant changes, developments or requirements.
- 4.4.6. Urgent items, or issues where Corporate Team require feedback from staff are sent out as a Core Brief. These are publicised down the management chain to reach all staff within 48 hours. Responses are collected and returned via the management hierarchy to Corporate Board.
- 4.4.7. All paid staff at the Council participate in a formal appraisal process. The Chief Executive's appraisal is conducted by the Leader of the Council. Targets agreed at appraisals are linked back to the Section and Service Plans, which are themselves derived from the Council's Corporate Plan and Corporate Aims and Objectives.
- 4.4.8. Information on progress against the corporate plan targets, corporate plan risks, LAA targets, National and local Indicators is reported on a quarterly basis to Members and the Corporate Board.
- 4.4.9. AVDC was again shortlisted for the 'Best Council to work for' awards in 2008, where it was placed at 23rd (compared to a placing of 18th in 2007). Work is now underway to ensure position is retained, and hopefully improved upon for 2009.

#### **4.5. The Audit Committee**

- 4.5.1. The Annual Report was produced in March 2009 and circulated to all members who will have the opportunity to raise questions at full Council.
- 4.5.2. The effectiveness of the Audit Committee forms part of the overall assessment of the effectiveness of Internal Audit, discussed below.
- 4.5.3. Audit Committee meetings have included regular training and information sessions to ensure that Members are able to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- 4.5.4. Audit Committee have provided challenge in some areas such as major projects by asking the relevant directors to come to the meeting to discuss the major project risks.
- 4.5.5. The Audit Committee's Terms of Reference also include oversight of the risk management arrangements at the Council. Training on risk management has been provided to Members of the Council as part of their induction programme and additional training has been made available to Members of the Audit Committee.

#### **4.6. Overview & Scrutiny Committees**

- 4.6.1. AVDC has four Scrutiny Committees which look at issues relating to Communities, Economy, Environment, Resources and Corporate Performance. Their role includes

policy development, service reviews, holding the Cabinet to account, representing community interests and external scrutiny. They look at how and why decisions are made, how services are functioning and whether there is scope for improvement and also consider wider community issues, particularly improving services to people living in the area.

4.6.2. An Annual Report on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees is presented to Council each year. The report for 2008-2009 was presented to the full Council meeting held in April 2009. It shows the number of meetings held, how many meetings each Member attended, some key issues considered and also the number of decisions “Called in” for further consideration by each Scrutiny Committee. In addition it includes a form to encourage members of the public to suggest items which they would like to see raised by the Scrutiny Committees.

4.6.3. *refer to the 2009 scrutiny work planning event*

#### **4.7. Standards Committee**

4.7.1. The Chairman of the Standards Committee presented his Annual Report to full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008. This sets out the work of the Committee over the year, including information on the Committee’s Role and Terms of Reference, an overview of its activities during the year and a report on the monitoring of complaints and compliance with the Code of Conduct.

4.7.2. Copies of the Annual Report are sent to all parish councils and published on the Council’s web site.

4.7.3. The introduction of local assessment of member complaints from May 2008 led the Standards Committee to review its role and composition during the year. A recommendation to amend its composition and increase the number of independent and parish council representatives on the committee to deal with the new responsibilities was approved by full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008. As a result a fourth independent member and third parish council representative were successfully recruited.

4.7.4. Members of the Standards Committee have received training in their role and in the new duties required following the introduction of local assessment. The committee also arranged a workshop on the code of conduct for town and parish councillors in the District which was attended by 44 councillors and clerks from 24 local councils.

4.7.5. The committee considered 1 complaint about a district councillor in 2008 which had been investigated by an Ethical Standards Officer appointed by the Standards Board for England before the introduction of local assessment. The ESO found that no breach of the code had taken place and therefore no action was required.

#### **4.8. Internal Audit**

4.8.1. The Internal Audit service operates under regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (amended 2006) and in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government.

- 4.8.2. The Council's Financial Regulations and Internal Audit Charter grant Internal Audit an unrestricted right of access to all Council records and property. They also confirm the organisational independence which allows Internal Audit to form an objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the whole system of internal control.
- 4.8.3. The Internal Audit Manager reports to the Corporate Director (Resources) and may also report direct to the Chief Executive, other Directors and Members of the Council if required.
- 4.8.4. A Probity Group consisting of the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Head of Internal Audit and Head of People and Payroll meets quarterly to discuss governance issues and significant risks to the Council.
- 4.8.5. The plan of work undertaken by Internal Audit is prepared with regard to the risks faced by the Council and following discussions with Directors and Heads of Service. It is presented to and approved by the Audit Committee.
- 4.8.6. The scope of work included in the annual audit plan extends beyond financial governance to include corporate governance, risk management, probity, value for money, effectiveness and compliance with laws and standards.
- 4.8.7. The outcome of all Audit reviews is reported to the responsible Director and Head of Service as well as to the Head of Finance (Section 151 officer) and Corporate Director (Resources). A summary of the report will also be presented to the Audit Committee.
- 4.8.8. Where recommendations for the improvement of controls or systems are made at the end of an Audit review, these are agreed with the responsible managers together with details of the required action and an expected date for implementation. These actions will then be included on a Tracker system which is used to monitor implementation. Reports from this system are provided to the Audit Committee on a regular basis.
- 4.8.9. Where action to address issues is not undertaken within the pre-determined timescales the Audit Committee can and has required the responsible manager to attend a formal meeting and be personally accountable.
- 4.8.10. The Council's External Auditors conduct a formal review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit once every three years. The review was undertaken in March 2009 and has confirmed that the Internal Audit service meets the expected standards. External Audit will continue to rely on the work of Internal Audit where appropriate.
- 4.8.11. The Head of Internal Audit identified the following significant issues during the year:

*information to be completed*

#### **4.9. Risk Management**

- 4.9.1. The risk management process is well established in all service areas and major projects.
- 4.9.2. The review of risk registers for each quarter of 2008/09 has also included a additional review of a specific aspect of the risk register. For example identifying the link to

specific corporate or service objectives. This has contributed to improving the quality of risk registers.

- 4.9.3. Integrating risk into the quarterly performance digest is a significant step forward and this area will be developed further as services start to use the performance management system.
- 4.9.4. Partnership risk management has progressed in some areas such as Pathfinder and Local Area Agreement but further work is still needed across some of the other significant partnerships.
- 4.9.5. Major projects all have risk registers but there is still improvement required in integrating the review of risks into project board/team meetings.

#### **4.10. Internal Control Self Assessments**

- 4.10.1. In preparation for the Annual Governance Statement a formal review of the governance and control arrangements in their areas has been completed by each Head of Service. Results have been returned to and reviewed by the Section 151 Officer, Internal Audit Manager and Risk Manager.
- 4.10.2. Where the returns have reported significant corporate governance or control weaknesses, these are included in the section on Significant Governance Issues below.

#### **4.11. Other Assurance and Review Mechanisms**

- 4.11.1. Aylesbury Vale District Council is subject to external review by its officially appointed External Auditors, the Audit Commission. They publish a series of reports on the Council's performance each year, which are reported to the Audit Committee. They also produce regular progress reports on their work for this Committee and are able to raise any items of concern with them.
- 4.11.2. The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, which provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council was presented to the Audit Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009. This is made available to the public by the Audit Commission and is also on the Council's web site.

#### **4.12. Actions taken to Strengthen Governance Arrangements during 08/09**

- 4.12.1. The following list is a summary of the some of the key improvements made during 2008/09.
  - updated protocols on member/officer relations and members involvement in commercial transactions
  - revised Planning Code of Good Practice
  - standards committee annual report
  - dedicated web pages for the standards committee including copies of case decisions
  - publication of guidance on the introduction of local assessment of members complaints in May 2008
  - training for members on declarations of interests and local assessment

- Information Security Policy approved and guidance issued to all staff
- Revised Risk Management Strategy
- Quarterly performance digest includes risk information

*? any thing else*

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## 5. Significant governance issues 2008/09

- 5.1. A number of significant control issues were raised in the Statement of Internal Control published with the 2007-2008 Accounts in June 2008. These have been updated and included below together with any new areas:

Year Identified	Issue	Improvement Required	Responsible Officer	Timeframe
07/08	<b>Joint Working and Partnerships.</b> The governance of all these arrangements needs to ensure full accountability for public money & openness of reporting. In addition new and revised Service Plans will need to be drawn up for the areas involved in these initiatives, to ensure that joint working arrangements meet the aspirations and objectives of all Councils involved.	All members need to receive regular information about the work of the partnerships	Tracey Aldworth	
07/08	<b>Information Security &amp; Data Protection.</b> <i>Details to specified</i>	<i>To be completed</i>		
07/08	<b>Business Continuity Plan Testing</b>	<i>To be completed</i>		
07/08	<b>Delivery of Capital Projects</b> The Council has a number of high profile projects in progress, including the building of a new theatre in Aylesbury. There is extensive public interest and	<i>To be completed</i>		

	resources in the Capital programme are limited. The Council must ensure that resources and risks are managed and prioritised effectively and that the budget is not overspent.			
07/08	<b>Project Management framework.</b> Managers must ensure that all major projects are following the corporate standards and risk registers are reviewed on a regular basis.	<i>To be completed</i>		

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**6. Assurance Statement**

- 6.1 We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by Audit Committee and plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system in place.
- 6.2 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that we identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:.....

Leader

Signed:.....

Chief Executive

on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council.



## Council Policies, Codes of Practice

### Public Documents

AVDC Corporate Plan 2008-2011 (issued May 2008) identifies the Councils Objectives and key actions to achieve these.

District Link

Council Tax Information leaflet distributed with Council Tax bills in March 2009

### ***Members Handbook – Constitution:***

Part 2 – Articles of the Constitution

Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions

Part 4 – Rules of Procedure

Part 5 - Codes and Protocols

Part 6 – Members Allowance Scheme

Part 7 – Management Structure

### ***Reference Handbook:***

C - Membership of Cabinet/Committees/Informal Groups/PAGs

H - Members Interests

I – Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality

G – Political Balance

M – Complaints Procedures

N – Media Relations

L – Representatives on Outside Bodies

### Committee Reports

Standards Committee Work Programme

See Audit Committee papers for Statement of Accounts 2007-8 and 2008-9 and the Audit Tracker which monitors implementation of recommendations made by Internal and External Audit.

Annual Scrutiny Report

### Other Documents/Policies

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Partnership Protocol

Equalities Strategy

Quarterly Financial Digest

Quarterly Performance Digest

District Line

Risk Management Strategy

Appraisal scheme

liP Accreditation

Confidential Reporting Policy

Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy

Compliments and Complaints Procedure

IT Security Policy