

Annual Governance Statement (2017/18)

This gives the results of our yearly assessment of how well we are managing and controlling risks, achieving our aims and meeting the responsibilities we have by law.

We are responsible for making sure that we:

- carry out our business in line with the law and proper standards;
- protect public money and account for it properly; and
- use public money economically, efficiently and effectively.

Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, require an authority to conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control, and to include a statement reporting on the review with any published Statement of Accounts. Regulation 6(1) (b) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that for a local authority in England the statement is an Annual Governance Statement.

In England, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 stipulate that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) must be “prepared in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts”. Therefore for a local authority in England this requires the statement to be in accordance with Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016) and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting for 2016/2017. In preparing and publishing this Statement, we therefore meet these statutory requirements.

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016) is an update to the 2007 publication and 2016/2017 is the first financial year for which this framework applies. The framework is intended to assist authorities individually in reviewing and accounting for their own unique approach. The overall aim is to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities, that there is sound and inclusive decision making and that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.

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. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Mid Devon District Council’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised. It ensures they are managed efficiently, effectively and economically.

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The review of internal controls provides assurance that the Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position at the reporting date and its financial performance during the year.

The assurance opinions derived from the work of Internal Audit are among the significant items that inform the AGS. The Head of Internal Audit's Opinion statement for 2017/18 stated:

Overall, based on work performed during 2017/18 and our experience from previous years' audit, the Head of Internal Audit's Opinion is of "Significant Assurance" on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's internal control framework.

The governance framework has been in place for the whole of the year ended 31 March 2018 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts. MDDC continually seeks to improve its governance arrangements and evidence of continued "best practice" is found within the governance review below. Arrangements are reviewed on a continual basis and where weaknesses have been found they are addressed as is demonstrated below in the Action Plan.

The Policy Development Groups are asked to feedback areas of concern to Cabinet, the Scrutiny Committee can and does challenge Cabinet decisions and the Audit Committee can and does challenge management over areas of concern identified in audit reports throughout the year.

This is the first year that the Council's wholly owned subsidiary 3 Rivers Developments Ltd has been in operation and that the Council has prepared consolidated accounts. The proposed shareholders' agreement with 3 Rivers (which is nearing final form) includes mechanisms to ensure the Company is accountable to the Council but is also able to function as an arms- length development company.

During the year progress against the previous year's AGS Action Plan is taken to every Audit Committee so that the action points can be monitored, not all the action points from the 2016/17 AGS Action Plan have been completed at this time; one item is not due for completion yet but 3 were and required more work. All were partially addressed and are included below in the Action Plan for 2017/18.

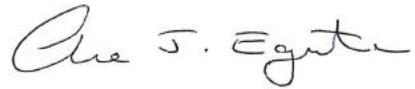
Overall the Authority has a robust Governance Framework and is not afraid to subject itself and its decisions to scrutiny or Peer review, this enables the Council to have assurance that its governance arrangements are sound but also treated as a live and evolving framework which can respond to the environment it finds itself in.

Following a review of the sources of assurance and evidence to support the AGS, it is the opinion of the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security that the Council's control environment was adequate in the 2017/18 financial year.

😊 = Assurance Received 😞 = Some additional work required

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Approved by the Leader of the Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clive J. Eginton".

Clive Eginton

Date: 16 July 2018

Approved by the Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Walford".

Stephen Walford

Date: 16 July 2018

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Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
How We Meet these Principles	Where You Can See Governance in action	Assurance Received and Issues Identified
<p>Behaving with integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We operate an appraisal scheme for all staff to identify development and skills needs and assess performance. • We provide new Members and staff with induction training on appointment. • We have Codes of Conduct for Members and Staff • Declarations of interest made at meetings are published with minutes and on our website. • We have registers of interests and gifts & hospitality for Members and Staff. • Our Whistleblowing policy was extensively rewritten in 2017. • We have a clear complaints procedure on our website and an up-to-date Customer Care Policy. • We take the Health and Safety of our 	<p>Staff Induction Policy</p> <p>Your Councillors - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK</p> <p>Fraud, Money Laundering and Whistleblowing - All Documents</p> <p>Complaints Procedure</p> <p>Customer Care Policy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Gifts & Hospitality and Declarations are audited regularly by Internal Audit</p> <p>Adherence to legislation is confirmed in each audit undertaken</p> <p>The Code of Conduct for Councillors and Co-opted Members was recommended to Full Council for Approval in April 2017</p> <p>Members Code of Conduct training is carried out by the Monitoring Officer</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Increase ethics awareness training in the staff induction process</p>

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<p>Staff extremely seriously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We evaluate the training needs of Members and run briefings on key topics to ensure they have the knowledge and information to make effective decisions.• We operate a protocol to govern the relationship between Members and officers that ensures access to appropriate information. <p>Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values</p> <p>The Council has the following documents which are relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Officers' Code of Conduct• Members' Code of Conduct• Protocol on Member/Officer Relations• Guidance for Members and staff on hospitality and gifts• Protocol of good practice for councillors dealing in planning matters• Staff Charter to communicate expected values and behaviours.• Financial regulations	<p>Member Development Policy</p> <p>Protocol on Member/Officer Relations</p> <p>Staff Charter</p> <p>Constitution</p>	
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<p>Respecting the rule of law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Constitution is under continuous review.• We ensure we comply with Statutory Provisions.• Compliance with CIPFA's <i>Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government</i> (CIPFA, 2015)• We have effective and up-to-date anti-fraud and corruption policies and procedures• Legal advice is given either as a stand-alone piece of advice or in relation to a case on which Legal Services are instructed to advise.• We recognised the importance of having effective arrangements in place for the Monitoring Officer function by updating and strengthening the role of the Monitoring Officer in the Council and recruiting a suitably qualified person for the post.	<p>The role of the Chief Financial Officer in local government</p> <p>Fraud, Money Laundering and Whistleblowing - All Documents</p>	
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Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement		
How We Meet these Principles	Where You Can See Governance in action	Assurance Received and Issues Identified
<p>Openness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We publish agendas and minutes for all our meetings on our website. We publish key decisions on the website We have a FOI publication scheme We have a standard report template We have a calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports. <p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We meet with our local colleges of FE and key local employers to discuss how the Council can support their work <p>Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We publish details of consultations and 	<p>Browse Meetings, 2018 - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK</p> <p>Forthcoming Decisions</p> <p>Publication Scheme - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK</p> <p>Report template</p> <p>Committee Report Procedure - All Documents</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>We publish recordings of all our meetings on the website (with the exception of Part 2 business).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Evidence of balancing feedback from more active stakeholders with other stakeholders to ensure inclusivity.</p>

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<p>petitions on our website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have policies for communication and Social Media• We have an active Tenant involvement group – Tenants Together which produces regular newsletters• Mid Devon Gypsy and Traveller Forum established	<p>Consultation & Involvement</p> <p>Communication strategy</p> <p>Housing News 4U</p>	
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Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes		
How We Meet these Principles	Where You Can See Governance in action	Assurance Received and Issues Identified
<p>Determining interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our governance structure is based on the strong leader and Cabinet with Policy Development Groups (PDGs) and Scrutiny Committee providing robust challenge. • The call in process for Scrutiny and reviews of performance by PDGs. • 3 Rivers shall prepare a Business Plan to include such content as the Council may require from time to time and notify to 3 Rivers in writing. The Business Plan shall cover a period of 5 years and shall be updated annually <p>Planning interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar of dates for developing and submitting plans and reports that are adhered to. • We publish details of consultations and petitions on our website. 	<p>Committee Report Procedure - All Documents</p> <p>Consultation & Involvement</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Regular reports on progress against the Corporate Plan including a set of agreed standard measures</p> <p>The process for aligning service budgets, plans and objectives has been reviewed and is more effective</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Service plans do not yet demonstrate consideration of 'social value'.</p> <p>Evidence of balancing feedback from more active stakeholders with other stakeholders to ensure inclusivity.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key Performance Indicators have been established and approved for each service element and included in the service plan and are reported upon regularly to Committees. <p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• budgeting medium term• financial strategy• process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term		
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Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it		
How We Meet these Principles	Where You Can See Governance in action	Assurance Received and Issues Identified
<p>Developing the entity's capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are committed to improving staff welfare which should reduce our sickness absence which is a direct cost to the Council. All Managers have been put through a Management Training Programme <p>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We provide all staff with job descriptions setting out their duties clearly and document the personal qualities and attributes required for each post. We operate an appraisal scheme for all staff to identify development and skills needs and assess performance. We operate a protocol to govern the relationship between Members and officers which ensures access to 	<p>Protocol on Member/Officer Relations</p> <p>Equality and Diversity</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>A programme of training and briefing sessions for elected Members has been agreed to ensure Members remain up to date with current issues, are clear about their roles, and have sufficient information to make informed decisions.</p> <p>3 Members have signed up to the Developing Your Leadership Potential Programme being run as part of a shared Member development service with other Devon and Somerset Authorities.</p> <p>The qualifications, skills, behaviours and personal attributes required by staff in their roles are identified and documented, and reviewed regularly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The current economic situation is likely to continue to see a reduction in the number</p>

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<p>appropriate information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We treat everyone fairly and equally.• We take the Health and Safety of our Staff extremely seriously.• We provide new Members with induction training on appointment.• We evaluate the training needs of Members and run briefings on key topics to ensure they have the knowledge and information to make effective decisions.• The Corporate Peer Challenge report in 2017 identified the extent to which we have radically-improved and confirms that we are in a strong position to address future challenges.• The Head of Paid Service has an annual appraisal and is set performance targets by the Cabinet	<p>Member Development Policy</p>	<p>of staff employed by the Authority. We have identified that this presents a potential risk to our ability to retain the skills and experience needed. Measures are being implemented to combat this risk.</p> <p>A Sickness Absence Action Plan is being developed by HR and the Health and Safety Officer</p>
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Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management		
How We Meet these Principles	Where You Can See Governance in action	Assurance Received and Issues Identified
<p>Managing risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reports which go to Committee include a risk assessment as part of the required components on our report template. • Our Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy was reviewed and approved by Audit Committee on 20 March 2018. • Risks on our risk register are allocated to individual managers who are named on reports. • The Audit Committee actively monitors risks and controls at their meetings. <p>Managing performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Performance has been mapped to the Corporate Plan; all our Aims have performance measures. • Benchmarking information is included where available a recent Council –wide subscription to LG Inform Plus is improving the use of benchmarking and 	<p>Report Template</p> <p>Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy</p> <p>Committee Report Procedure - All</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The Leader’s annual report to Scrutiny is mapped against the Corporate Plan priorities to make the link easier to see.</p> <p>Publication of agendas and minutes of meetings was 100 % on time.</p> <p>We have recently entered into internal audit management arrangements with Devon Audit Partnership which will further strengthen the effectiveness of our Internal Audit Service</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Still more benchmarking information is needed and stronger links between financial and performance monitoring.</p> <p>GDPR legislation now needs to be followed up with compliance and enforcement work.</p> <p>The Internal Audit report for Development</p>

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<p>is regularly promoted at Group Manager meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports that are adhered to. • All agenda and minutes of Scrutiny committee are published on our websites, including recordings of the meetings. • 3 Rivers shall ensure that the Managing Director shall attend meetings or parts of meeting(s) up to a maximum of four times per year as the Council may require on not less than 5 Business Days' notice and shall answer questions put by the Council and provide information regarding its activities as reasonably requested. • Performance and Risk Reports go to PDGs, Cabinet, Audit and Scrutiny Committees. • Leadership Team is committed to the performance framework. <p>Robust internal control</p>	<p>Documents</p> <p>Meetings, agendas, and minutes - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK</p> <p>RISK - All Documents</p> <p>Fraud, Money Laundering and Whistleblowing - All Documents</p>	<p>Control identified "Improvements Required" with regard to the inability of the legacy systems to provide a full overview of the 'trigger points' for all of the s106 agreements.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our Risk & Opportunity Management Strategy was reviewed and approved by Audit Committee on 20 March 2018.• We have effective and up-to-date anti-fraud and corruption policies and procedures• We have entered into a partnership to provide our Internal Audit Service in-house.• Our Audit Committee attend training offered internally and externally. <p>Managing data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have Data Protection and Information Security Policies in place.• We have mandatory Data Protection and Information Security training for all staff, Members and contractors (with access to our computer network)• We have a Data Quality Policy in place.• We check performance information as part of every audit we do.	<p>Internal Audit Outturn Report 2017/18</p> <p>Policies & Strategies - Home</p> <p>Policies & Strategies - Home</p> <p>medium term financial strategy</p>	
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<p>Strong public financial management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We publish a Medium Term Financial Strategy covering 5 years each year.• We publish Monitoring Reports from July to February each year• The budget book is published on the website	<p>Budgets - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK</p>	
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<p>of the Head of Internal audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We completed our annual self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	<p>CIPFA</p> <p>Internal Audit Outturn Report 2017/18</p>	
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