Governance Enhancement Activity to take place in 2019/20

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust. To enhance governance further the following activity pertaining to best practice has been identified:

- Officer Code of Conduct to be updated to reflect new working practices, in particular incorporation of social media protocols
- Production of Whistle Blowing Policy
- Review of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy
- Review the arrangements in place for decision making (Scheme of Delegation) for Executive functions.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust. To enhance governance further the following activity pertaining to best practice has been identified:

- Implement and embed the council's new Community Engagement Framework to enhance the council's consultation and engagement arrangements
- To enhance communication arrangements and implement recommendations made by the LGA during the Strategic Communications Peer Review, a new Communications and Marketing Plan has been developed for implementation in 2019/20.
- Launch of a new Stevenage Borough Council website to provide a portal for new customer online services.
- A new customer contact model to be produced to ensure alignment of customer service, IT, Digital Strategy and Future Council Business Unit Reviews

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and environmental benefits

Significant Governance activity to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework

- **Housing Asset Management Strategy:** Implementation of the first phase of the Action Plan to deliver the five year Housing Asset Management Strategy (2019-2024) to ensure the Council delivers maximum value from its assets whilst providing quality homes for its tenants.
- **General Fund Asset Management Strategy**: Implementation of actions identified for 2019/20 to implement the five year General Fund Asset Management Strategy. Activity includes review of the council's commercial portfolio and implementation of locality reviews.

In addition, ongoing monitoring is planned in mitigation of the following on-going risks:

- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, (agreed by Executive November 2016) is under ongoing review to ensure a balanced HRA financial plan for the next 30 years, and to ensure there are sufficient HRA funds to support the council's Housebuilding and Acquisitions Programme.

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme are under ongoing review to ensure finances remain robust in the long term and ensure the council can deliver the ambitions set out in the Future Town Future Council Programme; deliver a once in a generation investment in the town, through town centre regeneration, housing development and investment in neighbourhoods and become financially self-sufficient. There remains significant pressure identified in the General Fund report to the Executive (January 2019) which will mean that the Financial Security targets will need to be revised to meet a contribution to balances in 2022/23.

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Ongoing monitoring is planned in mitigation of the following on-going risks:

- Risks associated with the impact of Welfare Reform on the community and Council have been identified. The Council is continuing to assess potential impacts through business insight.

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust. To enhance governance further the following activity pertaining to best practice has been identified:

- Implementation of a new Contract Management Module to enhance procurement arrangements

- The Shared IT Partnership governance arrangements will continue to be enhanced. The Shared Services Partnership Board is overseeing the development and implementation of a single IT strategy that will deliver the Council's digital transformation ambitions and ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

- A Wholly Owned Company to be established to complement the council's existing and future property development activity. Governance arrangements for the new company will need to be identified, implemented and monitored.

- Protocols and governance arrangements to be developed and approved in preparation for transition of services to a new public sector hub.

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Significant Governance activity to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework:

- **Corporate Capacity:** Continue to implement the restructure of services through Future Council Business reviews to improve corporate capacity and deliver sustainable services that better meet the needs of customers.

In addition, to enhance governance further the following activity pertaining to best practice has been identified:

- A new Learning and Development Plan to be produced which will be aligned to meet workforce and succession planning needs.
- The results of the Staff Survey carried out in 2018/19 to be used to inform a new Corporate Workforce Plan

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Significant governance activity to facilitate compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework

- **IT Resilience, Governance, Policy Framework and Cyber Security:** The Shared IT Service to continue to develop and implement a strategy and programme of activity to enhance IT infrastructure, cyber security, governance, Policy Framework and IT resilience.

- **Information Management**: Continue to enhance and embed information management arrangements across the Council to ensure that best practice records management continues to be applied and customer data is appropriately managed.

- **Health and Safety**: Embed the new Health and Safety Framework to ensure health and safety compliance and performance across the Council.

- **CCTV Partnership:** The governance framework and business plan for the CCTV Partnership to be reviewed by the CCTV Joint Executive and Company Board of Directors

In addition, to enhance governance further the following activity pertaining to best practice has been identified:

- Approval and publication of a revised Anti-Money Laundering policy to enhance counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements
- An e-learning risk identification/management training offer to be developed
- A business continuity desk top exercise has been developed to be used by business units to test and validate their business continuity arrangements.
- Implement management and operational action to deliver effective financial management of the commercial property portfolio to meet the Council's Financial Security priority.
- Shared Anti-Fraud Service to work with Human Resources on the delivery of an e-learning package for staff and Members which will be linked to the Council's policies and fraud reporting tools to raise awareness of fraud as a risk

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust and no further governance activity is scheduled at this stage.