

The Cabinet

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REPORT

Councillor J Collier : Deputy Leader of the Cabinet

Review of Corporate Governance Arrangements

1. Report Summary:

The Corporate Governance Group has conducted a review of the Council's arrangements for Corporate Governance against the recommended framework produced by CIPFA (Chartered Institute for Public Finance & Accountancy and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). This report summarises the conclusions of the review, provides an Action Plan and a draft of a Local Code of Corporate Governance.

2. Introduction:

The CIPFA / SOLACE guide 'Corporate Governance in Local Government' was published in 2001 as best practice guidance for Local Authorities. It follows on from developments in the private sector and other parts of the public sector. The Audit Commission's Audit and Inspection Annual Letter 2003 recommended that the Council should review its Corporate Governance arrangements against the framework and adopt a Local Code.

A member/officer group was established to undertake the review in conjunction with the Audit Commission.

3. Definition of Corporate Governance:

The Audit Commission definition, used in their National Report in 2003, is:
'The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives.'

The framework for Corporate Governance is broken down into 5 dimensions:

- **Community Focus**
- **Service Delivery Arrangements**
- **Structures & Processes**
- **Risk management & internal control**
- **Standards of Conduct.**

4. Results of the Review:

The group undertook a review of arrangements in place against the model, identifying evidence and areas of strength and weakness. **Appendix A** contains this detailed self-assessment. The scores are subjective and reflect the views of the group. Nevertheless they provide a means to focus on areas requiring most improvement. Workshops, facilitated by the Audit Commission, were held with

Members, Extended Management Team and teamleaders to identify perceptions of strengths and weaknesses.

The conclusion from this work was that in many areas the Council's existing arrangements were robust or of a satisfactory standard. An action plan was drawn up to focus on key areas for improvement. This includes a link to other strategies and groups, which are already moving forward in certain areas. This Action Plan is at **Appendix B**.

5. Next Steps:

The Council should approve a Local Code of Corporate Governance which includes the recommended framework and which is appropriate for the Council. A Code has been developed based on the framework. This is at **Appendix C**.

The Local Code should be reviewed annually and the action plan updated. Policy Director David Crook has been delegated the responsibility for drawing up, implementing, monitoring and reviewing the operation of the code and an annual report will be made to Members on the operation of the code. Over time the self-assessment scores will change to reflect improvements made and also changes within the Council. There will be consultation with Management Team as part of the review.

6. Recommendations:

- (1) Approve the Local Code of Corporate Governance for Salisbury District Council.
- (2) Approve the action plan arising from the 2004/5 review of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements.

7. Background Papers:

Audit and Inspection Annual Letter 2003
Corporate Governance Review

8. Implications:

- **Financial** : There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- **Legal** : None in relation to this report
- **Human Rights** : None in relation to this report
- **Personnel** : None
- **Community Safety** : None
- **Environmental Impact:** None
- **Council's Core Values** : Corporate Governance is a key factor to support all the Council's core values.
- **Ward(s) Affected** : All
- **Consultation Undertaken:** Councillors, Independent Members of Standards Committee and officers were involved in self-assessment workshops. Detailed results are held by Internal Audit.

Appendix A

Dimension 1 – Community Focus

The Local Code should reflect the requirement to:	Source Document/other indicators of compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
<p>a) Annual report presenting an objective, understandable account of the authority's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities and achievements - Financial position and performance <p>The reports should include statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explaining the authority's responsibility for the financial statements confirming that the authority complies with relevant standards and codes of corporate governance on the effectiveness of the authority's system for risk management and internal control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of Accounts - Corporate Plan (incl BVPP) - Medium Term Financial Strategy - Asset Management Plan - Risk Management Policy - Annual Internal Audit Plan - Annual Audit Commission Plan - Statement of Internal Control 	<p>The Corporate Plan is published in précis form and provided to staff.</p>	<p>The Council has a Communication Strategy that will help to improve the communication of the Council's activities, achievements and performance.</p> <p>Consider more direct briefings for teamleaders and Service Unit Heads.</p>	6
<p>b) Publish performance plan presenting an objective, balanced and understandable account and assessment of the authority's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current performance in service delivery - Plans to maintain and improve service quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Plans - Leaflet that accompanies Council Tax demands - Portfolio Plans 		<p>It has proved difficult to develop performance targets in the new set of community plans and we need to continue working on this.</p>	7
<p>c) Put in place proper arrangements for the independent review of financial and operational reporting processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual audit letter and other audit reports - Scrutiny reports - Inspectorate reports (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate, CPA, ODPM report on Development Control, Best Value Inspectorate reports – Leisure, Revenue & Benefits, Planning, Car Parks, Community Safety). 			8

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The Local Code should reflect the requirement to:	Source Document/other indicators of compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
d) Put in place proper arrangements designed to encourage individuals and groups from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority and put in place appropriate monitoring processes to ensure that they continue to work in practice.	<p>Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of cabinet etc decisions on web - Diversity Policy - LSP terms of reference and protocols - Area Committee documentation - Citizen's panel terms of reference etc - BV Challenge Panels (involving stakeholders) - Tenants Panel - Community Development Policy - Youth Strategy - Parish Planning Process - Community Planning Evaluation Model - Community Grants-Monitoring/Evaluation - Compact and Operational Code of Practice - Partnership working e.g. Voluntary Sector Forum, SWAAP - Sports and Recreation strategy - Arts Policy - Local Plan - Social Inclusion Policy - Environmental Policy - Housing Strategy 	Awaiting Cabinet recommendations on reviewing approach to SI (Sept Cabinet) and Youth Strategy (Dec Cabinet) and SWSA approach to engaging hard to reach groups.	<p>Review monitoring arrangements of policies and agree a standard layout/template for future policies (think Graham Gould has this in his work programme).</p> <p>Increase participation of residents in Tenants Panel, BHNC, Area Committees.</p>	8
e) Make an explicit commitment to openness in all of their dealings, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so, and by their actions and communications deliver an	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitution - Data Protection Policy - Freedom of Information Act Policy - Compact Guidelines - Fraud Policy 	Openness is one of the Council's core values.	<p>The Corporate Communication Strategy will help to make Council's information more accessible.</p> <p>Specific examples that could be included as part of this work are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop website to make it more appealing leading to more people using it. 	7

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The Local Code should reflect the requirement to:	Source Document/other indicators of compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
account against that commitment.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore new ways to make information more accessible to the community e.g. signs on vehicles, greater use of radio. 	
f) Establish clear channels of communication with all sections of their community and other stakeholders, and put in place proper monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area Committee reports - Communication Strategy - Consultation strategy - IIP accreditation - Citizen newspaper - Website - Compact guidelines 	Little evidence of monitoring to ensure that they operate effectively.	<p>The Communication / Consultation group has responsibility in this area.</p> <p>As recognised by CPA we need to ensure that the results of consultation are fed back to people who have contributed.</p> <p>Introduce a corporate approach to consultation so that the same people aren't approached by a variety of service units.</p> <p>Introduce face-to-face research as well as People's Voice etc.</p> <p>Include open questions on consultation documents to allow people to express a wider range of opinions.</p> <p>Provide information direct to Parish Councils where appropriate.</p> <p>Introduce monitoring, on an informal basis, to ensure that lessons are learned and improvements made.</p>	5
g) Ensure that a vision for their local communities and their strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Plans - Portfolio Plans - Corporate Plan - LSP protocols and terms of reference 		Making sure all communication is in plain English with executive summaries, use of bullet points etc.	9

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Dimension 2 – Service Delivery Arrangements

The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:	Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
a) Set standards and targets for performance in the delivery of services on a sustainable basis and with reference to equality policies	Examples are: - BVPP - Best Value Final Reports - Scrutiny panel report on Sustainability - BV improvement plans - Service Plans - Portfolio Plans - Environmental Strategy	Are targets realistic and sustainable? – see staff survey Breadth of PIs needs addressing particularly against key priorities	Review of PI's Review of targets Need to focus on what matters. Avoid contradictions – financial challenge vs. environmental sustainability.. Key standards for equalities	7
b) Put in place sound systems for providing Management information and performance measurement purposes	Examples are: - Performance Management System - Finance Systems - HR systems - Intranet - IIP - BVPP - Scrutiny Panel Reports	Reliant on BVPIs not local PIs Performance reporting to members being examined Agresso being rolled out HR systems require improved accessibility	The group on Improving the Performance of the Council will lead improvements in this area. The following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make better use of PIs in day to day management• Improve data collection arrangements/record keeping for BVPIs• Implement and embed the reporting system to members• Linking PIs to financial and HR information• Assess the effectiveness of financial reporting using the Financial Management Model (CIPFA)	5
c) Monitor and report performance against agreed standards and targets and develop comprehensive and understandable performance plans.	Examples are: - Performance Management system - Top 20 PIs - Finance Systems - HR systems - IIP - BVPP - Scrutiny Panel Reports	Performance reporting to members being examined Developing exception reporting BVPP and P/folio plans well put together.	Implement and embed reporting system to members	8

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The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:		Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly reports to cabinet (PI's/finance) - Portfolio plans 	Summary plans good		
d)	Put in place arrangements to allocate resources according to priorities	Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate planning process - Budget consultation - Community Plan - Service Plans - Categorisation of services - Budget 	Criticised on this issue by CPA Further work has now been undertaken on the Medium Term Financial Strategy	The Meeting the Financial Challenge Group has responsibility in relation to this area. Review during present budget setting Achieving against agreed budgets	6
e)	Foster effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors, and consider outsourcing where it is efficient and effective to do so, in delivering services to meet the needs of the local community, and put in place processes to ensure that they operate effectively in practice	Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Strategy - LSP - Voluntary Sector Compact - Procurement strategy - BV reports - Community Planning - Budget consultation 	Focus to increase due to Gershon Do we do any monitoring? Leisure trusts. Housing stock options appraisal The Medium Term Financial Strategy now sets out a clearer policy on outsourcing.	The Procurement Group, through the Procurement Strategy, should develop the Council's approach to joint procurements with other bodies and outsourcing.	6
f)	Respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors and put in place arrangements for the effective implementation of agreed action plans.	Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual audit letter and other audit reports - Inspectorate reports - Improvement plan - CPA/Peer review reports - BFI report 	We do respond positively More engagement with staff on why we are doing something and how to achieve it.	Better internal communications Better linking with own objectives Ensuring adequate resourcing/honesty.	8

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Dimension 3 – Structures and Processes

The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:		Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
Balance of Power and Authority					
a)	Put in place clearly documented protocols governing relationships between Members and Officers	Examples are: - Office Code of Conduct - Members Code of Conduct	Officer Code of Conduct is contained in Staff Handbook given to all new employees. Significant changes are conveyed to SUH's	Consider routine reminders New model code currently being consulted on – consider communication.	8
b)	Ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of executive and other Members, Members generally and senior officers are clearly defined.	Examples are: - Members and staff codes of conduct – local and national - Job Descriptions	Believe that they are in existence	Communicate how these can be accessed.	7
Roles and Responsibilities – Members					
c)	Ensure that Members meet on a formal basis regularly to set the strategic direction of the authority and to monitor service delivery	Examples are: - Schedules of council meetings - Standing orders - Agendas and minutes available on internet and intranet - Briefings/Awaydays	We feel that this is happening	None	10
d)	Develop and maintain a scheme of delegated or reserved powers, which should include a formal schedule of those matters specifically, reserved for the collective decision of the authority.	Examples are: - Constitution - Scheme of Delegation		Arrangements are in place but perhaps need improved communication	10
e)	Put in place clearly documented and understood management processes for policy development, implementation and review and for decision making, monitoring, and control, and reporting, and formal procedural and financial regulations to govern the conduct of the authority's business	Examples are - Policy Development Procedure - Forward Plan	Recently revised	None	10

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The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:		Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
f)	Put in place arrangements to ensure that members are properly trained for their roles and have access to all relevant information, advice and resource as necessary to enable them to carry out their roles effectively		Member handbook being developed. Training Programme continually developed.	A regular survey of Members' needs for training and support should be carried out to ensure provision is satisfactory.	8
g)	Ensure that the role of the executive member(s) is/are formally defined in writing, to include responsibility for providing effective strategic leadership to the authority and for ensuring that the authority successfully discharges its overall responsibilities for the activities of the organisations as a whole.	Examples are - Constitution	Reviewed when Cabinet structure adopted	Job descriptions and personal development plans could perhaps be considered	10
h)	Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all members of the local authority, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly in writing		Legal requirement to publish allowances	Accessibility Consider more communication	7
i)	Ensure that a chief executive or equivalent is made responsible to the authority for all aspects of operational management	Examples are - Constitution - Contract of Employment		None	8
j)	Ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given to it on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for	Examples are - Constitution - Contract of Employment - Statement of Internal Control		There is an on-going requirement to ensure role is effectively explained and understood.	8

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The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:		Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
maintaining an effective system of internal financial control					
Roles and Responsibilities - Officers					
k)	Ensure that a senior officer is made responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with.	Examples are - Constitution - Contract of Employment		There is an on-going requirement to ensure role is effectively explained and understood.	7
l)	Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all senior officers, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review, are defined clearly in writing.	Examples are - Contract of Employment - Schemes quoted in Adverts	Reviewed nationally via NJC No formal Internal Review (JR is reactionary)		7
m)	Adopt clear protocols and codes of conduct ensure that the implications for supporting community political leadership for the whole council are acknowledged and resolved.	Member / Officer protocol		Periodic reminders to staff and training	7

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Dimension 4 – Risk Management and Internal Control

The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:	Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
a) Develop and maintain robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks which involve the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.	Risk management strategy Risk Register Project risk assessments	Some training given (SEMT) Needs embedding across the Council Needs to link to operational risks	Additional training across the organisation, which is compulsory for appropriate staff and monitored. Risk registers at operational level Clear responsibility/ownership	5
b) Put in place effective risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function. These arrangements need to ensure compliance with all applicable statutes, regulations and relevant statements of best practice and need to ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and are used economically, efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the statutory and other authorities that govern their use.	Internal audit in place which complies with CIPFA code Risk Management strategy Constitution and various internal control systems. Whistleblowing policy	Need to link risk management to internal controls Terms of reference for internal audit need to be updated in accordance with the latest CIPFA Code of Practice.	Develop risk management and identify where internal controls need to be reviewed to meet the risks. New terms of reference are being developed for approval by Cabinet (December)	6
c) Ensure that services are delivered by trained and experienced people	Progressive Employee Job descriptions IIP Training strategy Market forces Recruitment and retention policies	How up to date are job descriptions. Can they be used for performance management of people. The appraisal system has not been checked to ensure that corporate priorities flow through the Council.	Review performance management of staff and pay/rewards. Do we need to place more emphasis on growing our own talent? Career development.	8

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The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:	Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
d) Put in place effective arrangements for an objective review of risk management and internal control, including internal audit.	Reporting arrangements set in the terms of reference for internal audit. Risk Management strategy includes members responsibilities. Statement of internal control	The Constitution does not set out which member body fulfils the functions of an audit committee. Who should review the statement of internal control?	Clearly define how the Council discharges the functions of the Audit Committee, particularly in relation to Internal Audit, risk management and internal control. Appropriate arrangements for the Statement on Internal Control, in accordance with recommended practice, need to be developed.	6.5
e) Maintain an objective and professional relationship with their external auditors and statutory inspectors.	Annual audit letter	Good relations	Improve coordination of PI reporting	8
f) Publish on a timely basis, within the annual report, an objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the authority's risk management and internal control mechanisms and their effectiveness in practice.	Statement on internal control with be published as part of the 2003/4 accounts	Follows the transitional arrangements for compliance required for next year. 2003/4 statement has been mainly driven by the annual internal audit report rather than other risk management processes.	Needs to follow from risk management processes and needs to be more comprehensive. Links with risk management needs strengthening. 'Audit Committee' role needs to be established.	6

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Dimension 5 – Standards of Conduct

The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:	Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
a) Develop and adopt formal codes of conduct defining the standards of personal behaviour to which individual members, officers, and agents of the authority are required to subscribe and put in place appropriate systems and processes to ensure that they are complied with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes of Conduct for members and officers. Undertakings to observe the member Code signed by all members when taking office. Incorporation of the officer Code into contracts of employment. The member code is available on the council's web site. The officer code is available in the intranet. A code of conduct for members in relation to planning matters The members' Registers of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality Anti fraud and corruption policy - in leaflet form Complaints procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council adopted the mandatory code of conduct for members without addition and it is sufficiently comprehensive The Standards Board has indicated that it will be reviewing the member code. The officer code is too new to determine its effectiveness A code for agents of and contractors with the council would be useful The planning code of conduct needs updating The government has recently issued a draft officer code for consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation and adoption of a code of conduct for agents of and contractors with the council Preparation and adoption of an updated version of the planning code of conduct Publicise anti fraud and corruption policy and raise awareness of fraud risks. 	6
b) Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The member and officer codes of conduct (including the planning code) all cover these aspects. Contracts and Financial Procedures Rules Cards for members have been prepared and issued which explain their need to remain impartial in relation to planning applications. Members have received training on the code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members and officers are generally very aware of the need to act without prejudice etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the training given to both members and officers to ensure they remain aware of their responsibilities in this respect 	8

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The Local Code Should Reflect the Requirement to:	Source Document/Other Indicators of Compliance	Comments	Suggestions for Improvement	Score 0-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Monitoring Officer and her deputies advise members from time to time in relation to specific queries they raise about interests. ▪ Lack of complaints that members and officers are prejudiced etc. 			
c) Put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and to monitor their continuing compliance in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member and officer codes of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficult to see how to monitor this other than review allegations of breaches of the codes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider ways of monitoring compliance with codes other than by looking at complaints 	8
d) Put in place arrangements for whistle blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the council have access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The whistleblowing policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy has been circulated to all staff and is on the intranet. ▪ It is unlikely that anyone other than members and offices are aware of the code ▪ The policy is too new to determine its effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform those with whom the council does business of the policy 	8

Overall Conclusions

The review of arrangements and self-assessments through the workshops have identified many areas of strengths and where the necessary processes and arrangements are in place.

An Action Plan is required to ensure areas for improvement are identified and appropriate actions planned. This will need to focus on key areas, which in the review have scored less than 7 out of 10.

The principles of Corporate Governance need to be widely understood and ideally integrated into the culture of the Council.

2004/5 Review of Corporate Governance - Action Plan

The target date for the completion of all actions is December 2005. Individual target dates, unless already shown below, will be agreed with the lead groups or individuals identified.

Review Ref	Action	Lead	Specific Target Dates
General	Raise awareness of Corporate Governance and the relationship between it and effective service delivery. This will help to ensure that the organisational culture of SDC supports effective corporate governance.	Management Team and Extended Management Team	To be agreed
Community Focus			
1a 1f	Consider issues raised by the Corporate Governance review	Communication / Consultation group	To be agreed
Service Delivery Arrangements			
2b	Consider issues raised by the Corporate Governance review	Performance Management Group	To be agreed
2d	Consider issues raised by the Corporate Governance review	Meeting the Financial Challenge Group	To be agreed
2d	The Procurement Group, through the Procurement Strategy, should develop the Council's approach to joint procurements with other bodies and outsourcing.	Procurement Group	To be agreed
Structures and Processes			
3f	Consult with Group Leaders on how the take-up of training available to Members can be improved.	Management Team	To be agreed
Risk Management and Internal Control			
4a	Risk Management training. Embed risk management	Policy Director, through Risk Management Group	To be agreed
4b	Identify key controls to manage risks	Service Unit Heads	To be agreed
4b	Draft new Terms of Reference for Internal Audit for approval	Chief Internal Auditor	January 2005
4d	Prepare paper for Management Team on functions of Audit Committees	Chief Internal Auditor	December 2004
4d	Establish appropriate arrangements for developing the Statement on Internal Control for 2004/5	Chief Executive	By end of March 2005
4f	Publish a more comprehensive SIC for 2004/5	Chief Executive	Draft by June 2005
Standards of Conduct			
5a	Preparation and adoption of a code of conduct for agents of and contractors with the council	Monitoring Officer	To be agreed
5a	Preparation and adoption of an updated version of the planning code of conduct	Monitoring Officer	To be agreed
5a	Publicise anti fraud and corruption policy and raise awareness of fraud risks.	Chief Internal Auditor	To be agreed

Salisbury District Council
Local Code of Corporate Governance

The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which Salisbury District Council takes decisions, and leads and controls its functions, to achieve its objectives.

Introduction

The Code has been developed against the framework provided by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). It includes the three principles that underpin good governance:

- Openness and inclusivity
- Accountability
- Integrity

These principles are reflected in the five dimensions of the framework:

- Community Focus
- Service Delivery Arrangements
- Structures & Processes
- Risk management & internal control
- Standards of Conduct.

Review Arrangements

The Local Code will be reviewed annually and actions arising reported to Members.

Details of the Local Code

Community Focus

The Council will publish annually reports on:

- its activities and achievements;
- financial position and performance
- performance in service delivery.

Independent reviews from auditors and inspectors will be undertaken and results published.

The Council will encourage individuals and groups from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in its work.

The Council has adopted openness as one of its core values and will work to ensure that there are clear and effective channels of communication.

The Council's strategic plans and priorities will be developed using robust mechanisms and in consultation with the local community and key stakeholders.

Service Delivery Arrangements

The Council will set standards and targets for its performance in delivering services and put in place systems to provide management information.

Actual performance will be monitored against agreed standards and targets.

The Council will allocate its resources according to its agreed priorities.

To deliver its services the Council will foster effective relationships with partners and other agencies and will consider outsourcing where it would be efficient and cost-effective.

The Council will respond positively to findings and recommendations from external auditors and inspectors.

Structures and Processes

Through its Constitution the Council has put in place clearly defined roles and responsibilities for Members and officers. This also defines the decision-making, reporting and governance arrangements that control Council business.

The Council has put in place protocols for Members and officers to establish a proper balance of power and authority.

The Council will seek to ensure that these protocols operate effectively in practice.

Risk Management and Internal Control

The Council has developed a Risk Management Strategy to identify and evaluate significant risks to the achievement of the Council's objectives. This will be used to assist in the planning and delivery of services.

The Council recognises that internal controls, which link to identified risks, are needed to ensure compliance with statutes, regulations and best practice and to safeguard public funds. The Council will seek to ensure that appropriate controls are in place and that there are arrangements for review.

The Council has in place an Internal Audit function whose role is to audit and report on the effectiveness of internal controls.

The Council will seek to assess and report on its risk management and internal control mechanisms and their effectiveness in practice on an annual basis.

Through its management and personnel processes the Council seeks to ensure that services are delivered by trained and experienced people.

Standards of Conduct

The Council has codes of conduct for Members and officers to ensure that the principles of openness, integrity and accountability are established. The Council will seek to ensure that they are complied with.

The Council will seek to ensure that members and officers are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest.

The Council has in place arrangements for whistle blowing.