

## Appendix One

# Elected Member Continuing Development Programme – Governance Element

### The importance of corporate governance

Good corporate governance is an essential element in the efficient running of local government and is a critical element in achieving high levels of performance.

The Council's governance arrangements are concerned with the structures and process for decision-making, accountability and transparency. Put simply, they describe the need for the Council to have a clear direction and accountability and appropriate working arrangements in place to ensure we achieve what we set out to do.

There are a number of key dimensions associated with the Council's governance arrangement which elected members are responsible for. These include:

- Making sure that clear outcomes and priorities are in place
- Ensuring the right resources are in place to achieve these outcomes and priorities and that these resources are used efficiently
- Overseeing and monitoring the delivery of services to ensure that the Council's performance expectations are achieved
- Ensuring the way the Council operates is transparent and accountable to the communities that elected members represent.

The internal governance, ethics, and relationships which underpin good governance are set out in the Council's Standing Orders and Elected Members' Role Profiles.

### What does good corporate governance look like?

In essence good governance means:

- focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for citizens and communities
- elected members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

- promoting the values of the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective
- engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

### **What are the roles of Elected Members and officers in the Council's corporate governance?**

A strong and effective council requires elected members and officers to have a sound understanding of their separate but complementary roles.

In order to maximize and achieve our priorities including those set out in the Belfast Agenda, the Council's community plan, there must be:

- clearly understood political and managerial structures
- professional and constructive relationships between elected members and between elected members and officers
- a shared commitment to council priorities
- constructive debate at council and committee meetings

## **Continuing development programme- what elements of corporate governance will the programme focus on?**

A continuing development programme to further support members in their governance roles has been developed. The programme sessions will, in the main, be delivered by senior council officers and will examine the roles of elected members across a range of corporate governance themes. These will include:

- Code of Conduct including Planning and social media aspects.
- General data protection regulations (GDPR)
- Decision making in the legal and political context including the General Power of Competence
- Good Governance and Due Diligence
- Managing our Finances
- Regeneration and Investment in the City
- Members' roles on outside bodies and external boards
- Training in the role of chair
- Fraud, bribery, corruption and whistleblowing
- The Election and Count Processes

## Elected member continuing development programme– Governance (April 2018-March 2019)

Session title	Session aims	Indicative content	Attendees	Proposed method of delivery	Date and time	Facilitator
1. Code of Conduct including Planning and social media aspects.	To provide members with an overview of the Code of Conduct following four years of its implementation and members' compliance responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of the Local Government Commissioner for Standards in dealing with alleged breaches</li> <li>• Conflict of interest and disclosure</li> <li>• Social media and the Code</li> <li>• The Code and the right to freedom of expression</li> <li>• Key lessons from casework</li> <li>• Scenario based Q&amp;A</li> </ul>	All elected members	Interactive session	22 March 2018 and 26 March 2018	Office of the NI Ombudsman- Local Government Commissioner for Standards
2. General data protection regulations (GDPR)	To provide members with an understanding of the new EU General Data Protection Regulations in respect of their roles as Members of the Council.	To raise Members' awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the GDPR</li> <li>• What is considered personal data</li> <li>• What are the new data protection principles</li> <li>• What changes does it introduce</li> <li>• Where you can find further information</li> </ul>	All elected members	Briefing session	16, 17 and 22 May 2018	Internal delivery- Information Governance Unit
3. Decision making in the legal and political context including the General Power of Competence.	To provide members with an objective understanding and appreciation of their individual and collective council responsibilities in making good decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy as the basis for decision-making</li> <li>• Member and officer roles - accountability and decision-making</li> <li>• The do's and don'ts</li> </ul>	All elected members	Briefing session	August and September 2018	Internal delivery- Legal Services Audit, Governance and Risk Services;

Session title	Session aims	Indicative content	Attendees	Proposed method of delivery	Date and time	Facilitator
	To provide members with an understanding of action- legal, policy and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal principles for decision-makers</li> <li>• Legal challenges to decisions</li> <li>• Scrutiny and challenge</li> <li>• Application of the General Power of Competence</li> <li>• Judicial Review</li> </ul>				
4. Good Governance and Due Diligence	To support elected members in their organisational governing role by providing an overview of the structures, processes and controls in place to ensure effective decision-making and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council's code of governance</li> <li>• Assurance framework</li> <li>• Performance Improvement Duty</li> <li>• Corporate Performance and improvement approach</li> <li>• Corporate performance measures</li> <li>• Reporting on performance</li> <li>• Risk management approach</li> <li>• Audit and Risk Panel</li> </ul>	All elected members	Briefing session  Reference to Elected Member Role Profiles and Knowledge and Skills Framework	September and October 2018	Internal delivery- Audit, Governance and Risk Services; Legal Services
5. Managing our Finances	<p>To increase members' awareness of:</p> <p>The financial arrangements for the Council</p> <p>The financial pressures faced by the Council.</p> <p>The importance of the rate base and the city centre to future investment and growth in the city.</p> <p>To provide information on the sources of council finances, the discrete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The financial environment</li> <li>• Financial priorities</li> <li>• Council income</li> <li>• Local Government Finance Act</li> <li>• Funding capital expenditure</li> <li>• Efficiency programme</li> <li>• Rates setting process</li> </ul>	All elected members	Briefing session  Provision of rates setting guide.	November 2018	Internal delivery- Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources and Head of Finance and Performance

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	capital and recurrent expenditure streams and the links to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda and the Corporate Plan.					
6.Regeneration and Investment in the City	To provide Members with an opportunity to see key city wide projects and council assets across the city and also in the city centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Investment Strategy</li> <li>• Outcomes for the City including programme of city wide site visits</li> </ul>	All elected members	Briefing session and city wide site visits	November/ December 2018	Alastair Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy; and Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects.
7.Training in the role of chair	To develop members' understanding of the roles and expectations for effective meetings including the role of the chair; the best structure for chairing meetings and to develop skills and techniques to get the most from the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of the Chair</li> <li>• Committee protocols</li> <li>• Chairing meetings</li> <li>• Effective chairing skills- practical tips and techniques</li> <li>• Case studies</li> </ul>	Newly appointed Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees, working groups	One to one session to include provision of chairperson toolkit	June 2018	Internal and external delivery: Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager and Harry McConnell, external facilitator.
8. Members' roles on outside bodies and external boards	To increase Members awareness of the types of third party bodies they may be asked to sit on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase understanding of the potential liabilities and conflicts of interest that may arise.</li> <li>• To consider what steps can be taken to mitigate any risks.</li> <li>• Indemnity issues</li> <li>• To provide an overview of the risk, control and</li> </ul>	All elected members- those appointed to Outside Bodies and external boards	Briefing session	October 2018	Internal delivery- Audit, Governance and Risk Services; Legal Services and input from the Democratic Services Manager

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		<p>governance issues Members may face on external bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide practical advice to Members on how they can effectively exercise their oversight role on external bodies / Company Boards</li> </ul>				
9. Fraud, bribery, corruption and whistleblowing	<p>To raise member's awareness of the risks and consider members' roles and responsibilities linked to the Code of Conduct and the Council as a whole</p> <p>To illustrate through examples what can happen and the Council's response to such risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risks of fraud, bribery and corruption</li> <li>Members governance role and Code of Conduct- do's and don'ts</li> <li>Whistleblowing</li> <li>Judicial Review</li> </ul>	All elected members	Briefing session	January 2019	Internal delivery- Audit, Governance and Risk Services; Legal Services
10. The Election and Count Processes	To increase members' awareness of the election and count processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electoral Commission Guidance</li> <li>Logistics and timing of the count</li> <li>Maintaining the integrity of the count</li> <li>Role of the Deputy Returning Officer</li> <li>Role of appointed count agents</li> <li>Candidates, guests and impartial observers</li> </ul>	All elected members-delivered for each Party Group and Independents	<p>Briefing session</p> <p>Electoral Commission Guidance</p> <p>Internal Guide to the Election Process</p>	February /March 2019	Internal delivery- Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager and Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication during the verification and count</li> <li>• Determining and announcing results</li> <li>• Media presence</li> </ul>				

Note: Following the delivery of each session the training material will be available on the Members' Portal for reference purposes.

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