

Crawley Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It must also ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and is used economically, efficiently and effectively.



interest. There is a requirement to update this within 28 days of any interest changing. The register for each member is available on the website [Your Councillors - Crawley Borough Council](#)

The [Governance Committee](#) is responsible for regularly reviewing the Constitution and ensuring that it is both up to date and fit for purpose. Significant changes to the Constitution are considered by the Governance Committee before being put before the Full Council for adoption.

The Council's [Whistleblowing Policy](#) is up to date and sets out the options and associated procedures for Council staff to raise concerns about potentially illegal, unethical or immoral practice and summarises expectations around handling such matters.

The Council has an [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#), [Anti Bribery Policy](#) and [Anti Money Laundering Policy](#) and continue to be working effectively.

The Council has a Fraud and Investigations Team which acts to minimise the risk of fraud, bribery, corruption and dishonesty and recommends procedures for dealing with actual or expected fraud. The Team also prosecutes, where appropriate, and is involved in fraud training and awareness.

The Council's [Complaints Policy](#) sets out the complaints handling process and signposts customers to the relevant Ombudsman (Local Government & Social Care and Housing Ombudsman) if they remain dissatisfied. Both Ombudsmen produced new Codes based on unified principles in February 2024. The Housing Ombudsman Code is statutory from the 1 April 2024. The council revised its Policy to ensure compliance with the changes, effective from the 1 April 2024 and is on the Council's website. The council completed its [annual self-assessment](#) against the Housing Ombudsman Code in June 2024, which identifies areas where we do and do not comply with the Code. Areas where we don't currently comply include an explanation of the action that will be taken to make further improvements. This is published on the council's

Annual Plan, Develop and Review (PDR) discussions take place and are linked to the Council's values and behaviours .
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The [Transformation Plan 2023-2026](#) was updated in October 2023 and is the third iteration. The latest plan includes several projects under six workstreams: Our services to customers, supporting our communities, our assets, our people, commercialisation and service redesign. The Transformation Board, chaired by the Head of Digital and Transformation and includes the Corporate Management Team, HR & OD Manager and the IT and Transformation Programme Manager monitor progress against the Transformation Plan actions. The board meets monthly.

Public consultation on the [Local Plan – Crawley 2030](#) took place in May – June 2023 after [Lm1103Fk4\(3\)4\(\)-eq](#)

renewal, skills for the future and connected Crawley. These priorities are being delivered via the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, Crawley Growth Programme, Towns Fund and Employment and Skills Programme.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. In November 2021, the Cabinet agreed the Council's [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) which includes short, medium and long term actions. Details of current activities are available on the Council website. [Climate emergency | Crawley GOV](#). Significant achievements in

Cabinet reports are considered by the [Overview and Scrutiny Commission](#) who provide challenge and enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard.

Internal Audit produces an annual audit report and assurance opinion. External audit also comments on the

The Council operates a robust interview and selection process to ensure that staff are only appointed if they have the right level of skills and experience to effectively fulfil their role. The Council has shared [values and behaviours](#) that reflect the special nature of the Council.

	<p>Service Plans are in place to ensure delivery of key outcomes and priorities and identify operational risks.</p>

The [Risk Management Strategy](#) sets out the roles and responsibilities for risk management arrangements in the



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and members. The Council's Information Security Officer and wider team keep abreast of developments

<p>The Council's Corporate Debt Policy sets out our approach to income collection and debt recovery and is overseen by the Corporate Debt Group, which is chaired by the Head of Corporate Finance (s151 Officer). The Council uses "Lateral" software to enable it to have a shared view of debt across the Council. This system identifies people that are vulnerable and points them to get debt advice to help avoid them getting into further debt.</p>
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Internal Audit is provided by the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) and fully conform with all requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Council maintained a fully compliant internal audit service in 2023/24. SIAP produced an [Internal Audit Charter 23/24](#) which formally defines the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, and responsibility. This was approved by the Audit Committee on the [20 March 2023](#) and is updated annually.

Internal Audit Progress reports are presented to the [Audit Committee](#) on a quarterly basis. These provide an update on "live" audit reports, progress against the Annual Audit Plan and any significant issues that might impact the annual audit opinion.

The Chief Internal Auditor (Head of SIAP) provides an independent and objective annual opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, risk management, and governance each year and is in accordance with the PSIAS. Report [FIN/665](#) was presented to the Audit Committee on the 9 July 2024 where the [Annual Audit Report and Opinion](#) was considered.

External Audit (Ernst & Young) produce an annual report which brings together all of the auditors work over the year. It provides a commentary on value for money (VFM) arrangements and provides recommendations arising from the audit and progress against follow up recommendations. The [annual report](#) for the year ended 31 March 2022 was presented at the [12 March 2024 Audit Committee](#). The

part of the Statement has a series of financial measures. The council publishes full audited accounts each year on the website [Statement of accounts | Crawley GOV](#)

The Council has a legal responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. After conducting this review, the Council has assurance that its governance arrangements and systems of control are robust and reflect the principles of the Code of Corporate Governance.

The following processes have been applied throughout the year in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework:

Undertook a self-assessment of these governance arrangements, and all declared they had adhered to the governance and decision-making arrangements in place for 2023/24.

The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), Head of Governance People & Performance (Monitoring Officer) and Head of Corporate Finance (s151 Officer) hold monthly Statutory Officer meetings to ensure governance arrangements are sound.

Responsible for most council services and recommends the budgets and key policy proposals to full Council for agreement.

Provides Full Council with advice and a steer on Constitutional issues including Standards matters, the Code of Conduct for Councillors, the Council's Political and Management Arrangements, Corporate Governance, Elections (including Ward Boundary Reviews), Councillors' Allowances and all non-Executive functions.

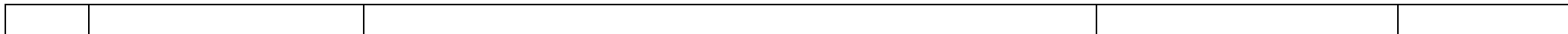
Approves the Council's Annual Accounts, oversees Internal and External Audit activity and oversees the effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements.

Provides "critical friend" challenge and holds to account the Executive decision makers (i.e., The Leader the Cabinet, Cabinet Members & Senior Officers)

External Audit (Ernst & Young) undertook their audit of the 2021/22 audit work in accordance with the Audit Plan issued in February 2023. This complied with the National Audit Ofices (NAO) 2020 Code of Audit Practice. The report was presented at [Audit Committee on the 12 March 2024](#)

Progress on the governance improvement areas identified during the 22/23 review:

Continue to implement the actions identified in the Health and Safety		
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Updates to the Social Housing Regulation Bill to introduce 'Awaab's Law', which will require landlords to fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes.

Growth in posts was agreed by Cabinet on the 10 January 2024, to reflect the change in demand arising from the standards set by the

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements as defined above, have been operating effectively during the year and remain fit for purpose.

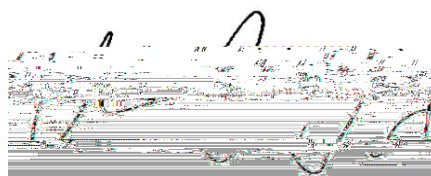
Signed on behalf of Crawley Borough Council:



Councillor Michael Jones

Leader of the Council

Date: 09/10/24



Ian Duke

Chief Executive

Date: 24/09/24