Governance Health Check

Section 1: Constitutional & Policy Checklist

Tick if document is formally adopted and up to date. Record completion/review dates.

1. Core Documents — statutory requirements (13 items)

	Document	✓	Completion/next review date
1	Annual Accounts	☑	14.04.26
2	Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)	☑	13.05.26
3	Asset Register	☑	13.05.26
4	Code of Conduct	☑	13.05.26
5	Complaints Policy	☑	14.05.25
6	Data Protection Policy & Supporting Privacy Notices	☑	11.03.26
7	Equality & Diversity Policy	☑	13.05.26
8	Financial Regulations	☑	13.05.26
9	Health & Safety Policy	☐	out of date - addressing with DAPTC
10	IT Policy	☑	14.01.26
11	Publication Scheme (Freedom of Information)	☑	13.05.26
12	Risk Management Policy & Risk Register	☑	13.05.26
13	Standing Orders	☑	13.05.26
	Score	12	out of 13

2. Recommended Documents — expected by auditors (17 items)

	Document	✓	Completion/next review date
14	Biodiversity Duty Policy	☐	missing
15	Climate and Environmental Policy	☐	out of date
16	Co-option Policy	☑	14.01.26
17	Councillor Responsibilities	☑	on website, checked annually
18	Document Retention and Disposal Policy	☑	11.03.26
19	Expenses Policy	☐	missing
20	Grants Policy	☑	09.07.25
21	Internal Controls Policy	☐	out of date
22	Investment and Reserves Policy	☐	missing
23	Media and Communications Policy	☑	13.05.26
24	Privacy Policy (separate from Data Protection)	☑	14.01.26
25	Scheme of Delegation	☐	missing
26	Training & Development Policy	☐	out of date
27	HR – Dignity at Work/Bullying & Harassment Policy	☐	missing
28	HR – Disciplinary Policy	☑	13.05.26

29	HR – Grievance Policy	☑	09.07.25
30	HR – Up to date Contract(s) of Employment	☑	13.05.26

Score 9 out of 17

3. Other/Relevant HR Documents — good practice (8 items)

	Document	✓	Completion/next review date
31	Absence/Sickness Management Policy	☐	missing
32	Annual Leave Policy	☐	missing
33	Emergency/Dependents Leave	☐	missing
34	Flexible Working Policy	☐	missing
35	Homeworking Policy	☑	09.07.25
36	Lone Working Policy	☐	missing
37	Parental/Family Leave Policies	☐	missing
38	Recruitment Policy (HR)	☐	missing

Score 1 out of 8

Total score 22 out of 38

Result

Score	Constitutional status
0 - 10	**CRITICAL DEFICIT**: immediate action within 3 months
11 - 20	**Below level**: urgent action within 6 months
21 - 30	**Safe zone** if 13 core documents are present
31 - 38	**Strong governance to fully compliant**

Next step

Complete section 2

Governance Health Check

Section 2: Operational Practices RAG Assessment

Tick each item depending on how compliant the council is: **Red**: not compliant, **Amber** sometimes compliant or **Green**: wholly compliant. Record any notes and actions required.

1. Decision Making (3 indicators)

	Indicator	R	A	G	Notes/actions
1	Full Council meets regularly and is the ultimate decision-making body	☐	☐	☑	
2	Decisions are recorded in the minutes with clear resolutions	☐	☐	☑	
3	Urgent decisions follow a clear protocol	☐	☑	☐	
	Scores	0	1	2	out of 3

2. Meetings & Conduct (6 indicators)

	Indicator	R	A	G	Notes/actions
4	Agendas are published with 3 clear days' notice	☐	☐	☑	
5	Minutes are published promptly and approved at the next meeting	☐	☐	☑	
6	Meetings are quorate and conducted in line with Standing Orders	☐	☐	☑	
7	Chair ensures meetings are respectful and follow the Code of Conduct	☐	☐	☑	
8	Councillor interests are registered, and declarations made at meetings	☐	☐	☑	
9	Councillors have signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office	☐	☐	☑	
	Scores	0	0	6	out of 6

3. Finance & Audit (7 indicators)

	Indicator	R	A	G	Notes/actions
10	An annual budget is prepared and approved before the precept deadline.	☐	☐	☑	
11	The Council monitors its budget at least quarterly	☐	☐	☑	
12	Bank reconciliations and accounts are up to date and reported	☐	☐	☑	
13	AGAR approved, published, and the audit rights are observed	☐	☐	☑	

14	Internal audit is carried out at least annually and actions are followed up	☐	☐	☑	
15	Asset register is maintained and reviewed annually	☐	☐	☑	
16	Insurance cover is reviewed annually (assets, liability, fidelity)	☐	☐	☑	
	Scores	0	0	7	out of 7

4. Governance & Democracy (4 indicators)

	Indicator	R	A	G	Notes/actions
17	Council has a parish or council plan that is monitored	☑	☐	☐	
18	Policies are up to date, reviewed, and published on the council website	☐	☑	☐	
19	All seats were filled at the last ordinary election	☐	☐	☑	
20	Vacancies are managed effectively through co-option	☐	☐	☑	
	Scores	1	1	2	out of 4

5. Culture & Staffing (6 indicators)

	Indicator	R	A	G	Notes/actions
21	Clerk is CiLCA qualified or working towards it	☐	☐	☑	
22	Staff contracts use the NALC model and are up to date	☐	☐	☑	
23	Annual staff appraisals are carried out	☐	☐	☑	
24	All councillors and officers are trained, including Code of Conduct, Confidentiality, Member/Officer Relations	☐	☑	☐	
25	Council has adopted the Civility & Respect Pledge	☑	☐	☐	
26	Line management of the Clerk is documented and adhered to	☐	☐	☑	
	Scores	1	1	4	out of 6

6. Transparency & Digital (4 indicators)

	Indicator	R	A	G	Notes/actions
27	The Council's website is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA	☐	☐	☑	

28	The Council uses a council-owned domain and email addresses	☐	☐	☑	
29	The Council publishes expenditure data in line with its legal obligations	☐	☐	☑	
30	The Council's electronic and paper records are stored securely and remain accessible in any circumstances (i.e. are backed up)	☐	☐	☑	
	Scores	0	0	4	out of 4
	Total scores	1	3	25	out of 30

Result

Green score	Operational status
0 - 10	**CRITICAL DEFICIT**: immediate action within 3 months
11 - 20	**Below level**: urgent action within 6 months
21 - 29	**Safe zone**: minor improvements required
30	**Exemplary governance**: full health

Next Steps & Action Planning

Report to a full council meeting:

- Formalise results in a report
- Agree what improvements are needed, and how they will be made - including resources required - and target dates for completion

Prioritising improvements:

1. Core documents from Section 1, part 1
2. Recommended documents from Section 1, part 2
3. Red scored operational practices from Section 2
4. Amber scored operational practices from Section 2

Support

DAPTC can support councils wishing to improve their governance health. The team is made up of experienced clerks who can offer support and signpost councils to template documents.

While not qualified professionals for legal, financial or HR matters, DAPTC can direct councils to specialised experts if that is the support required.

Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils
Email: daptc@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01305 224460