

Cambridge City Council - Code of Corporate Governance 2015-16

Review Date: 26 June 2015

A Council's Code of Corporate Governance is:

“The system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities”

Guidance from CIPFA and SOLACE suggests each local authority should have a Code of Corporate Governance based on 6 principles:

- 1 Focusing on the purposes of the authority; on outcomes for the community; and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
2. Members and Officers working together to achieve common purposes with clearly defined functions and roles.
3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management.
5. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective.
6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

The Council adopted a Code of Corporate Governance on 25 April 2002. It has been reviewed annually since then. This is the 2015 review. The Council's Civic Affairs Committee will be asked to consider the revised Code and to recommend it to full Council for adoption.

This Code takes each of the principles of good governance in turn and sets out the systems, processes and principles the Council has put in place to ensure good corporate governance.

The Code will be reviewed annually through the Annual Governance statement process, which will identify the actions to be taken to enhance the code or address any limitations with in it.

Simon Pugh
Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

5 June 2015

1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority; on outcomes for the community; creating and implementing a vision for the local area

		Supporting Evidence
1.1	<p>The Council will have a clear vision for the City and set objectives to guide the Council's activities.</p> <p>It will review those objectives each year, through the Annual Statement agreed at the Annual Council meeting.</p>	<p>Vision</p> <p>Annual Statement</p>
1.2	<p>The Council will agree with partners a business plan for the Local Enterprise Partnership, and contribute to the agreement of priorities for the Health & Wellbeing Board and other relevant countywide partnerships.</p>	<p>Local Enterprise Partnership Business Plan</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p>
1.3	<p>The Council will have a Mid-Year Financial Review to resource the Council's aspirations and to assess and plan for any financial risks. The strategy will be reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Mid-Year Financial Review</p>
1.4	<p>The Council will put service to the public first. The annual portfolio planning process will be used to agree the priorities for each area of Executive Councillor responsibility. The Plans express the strategic objectives for the portfolio over the financial year 2015/16 and beyond.</p>	<p>Portfolio Plans</p> <p>Agenda for Scrutiny Committees March 2015/16 cycle</p>

	<p>Beneath each of the objectives are detailed the particular outcomes to be achieved in 2015/16. Finally the plans will include performance measures that will provide evidence that the outcomes have been achieved.</p> <p>This information will enable members and the services contributing to the delivery of the plan to be clear about the priorities for the portfolio and will assist in decisions about where resources should be focussed within the portfolio.</p> <p>Heads of individual service areas prepare operational plans indicating how they will meet objectives set in portfolio plans and setting out their priorities and work programmes for the year ahead.</p>	Operational Plans
1.5	<p>Each year the Council will publish an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, performance, future plans and financial statements.</p>	Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
1.6	<p>The Council will seek to provide value for money to local people.</p> <p>It will work to maximise its resources by delivering services as efficiently as possible, working in partnership with others and using other providers where these are the best options.</p> <p>It will have a clear Procurement Strategy designed to meet the Council's wider objectives and Contract Procedures Rules designed to deliver robust and fair procurement processes.</p>	Procurement Strategy

2 Members and Officers working together to achieve common purposes with clearly defined functions and roles

		Supporting Evidence
2.1	<p>The Council will set out a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Members, other Members and Council Officers in its Constitution.</p> <p>The scheme of delegation within the Constitution will make clear what matters are reserved for collective decision-making by full Council.</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>Member/Officer Protocol</p>
2.2	<p>A Member/Officer protocol will be used to aid effective communication between Officers and Members and to clarify their respective roles and appropriate ways of working.</p>	
2.3	<p>The Council's Chief Executive is its Head of Paid Service responsible and accountable to the authority for its operational management.</p> <p>The Head of Finance is the Council's Chief Financial Officer and S151 Officer, responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p> <p>The Head of Legal Services is the Council's Monitoring Officer, responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>Job Descriptions for the Chief Executive, Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Schedule on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer</p>

2.4	<p>The Council will ensure that these Statutory Officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.</p>	<p>Portfolio Plans Performance Reviews Professional Qualifications and training</p>
2.5	<p>The Council's Civic Affairs Committee will be responsible for constitutional issues and will ensure that the constitution is monitored and updated when required.</p>	<p>Terms of Reference of Civic Affairs Committee</p>
2.6	<p>The Council will use an Independent Remuneration Panel to give advice on payments for Members and consider their advice when setting the Members' Allowance Scheme.</p> <p>The Panel will operate in an open and transparent manner, making their agendas, reports and minutes available to the public.</p> <p>The Members' Allowance Scheme will also be made available to the public and on the Council's website and the scheme will be reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference Independent Remuneration Panel agendas, reports and minutes Members' Allowance Scheme Pay Policy Statement</p>
2.7	<p>When working in partnerships the Council will ensure that Members are clear about their roles and responsibilities, both individually and collectively, in relation to the partnerships and to the Council.</p>	<p>Partnership Terms of Reference Principles of Partnership Working</p>

It will also ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of each partnership and that all representatives in the partnership have clarity about their powers to bind their own organisation to partnership decisions.

The Council will operate in accordance with principles of partnership working agreed with our key partner organisations.

3 Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

		Supporting Evidence
3.1	<p>The Council will expect the authority's leadership – both Members and Officers - to create a climate of openness, support and respect and to uphold the Council's values as expressed in the Council's Mid-Year Financial Review document.</p> <p>The standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and staff will be set out in the Officer Code of Conduct, the Member Code of Conduct and in the Member/ Officer protocol. An up-to-date register of Member and Officer Senior Officer Interests will be maintained.</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>Confidential Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>Annual Complaints Report</p> <p>Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy</p> <p>Register of Interests</p>
3.2	<p>The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for Councillors and has put in place procedures for considering complaints. The Council has appointed two “independent persons” to support this, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act, 2011.</p> <p>It will maintain a Whistleblowing policy to enable confidential reporting of suspected breaches of the Officer Code of Conduct or unethical behaviour and will report on how the policy is used through the Annual Review of the Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy.</p> <p>It will also maintain a Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy and both policies will be reviewed regularly by the Civic Affairs Committee.</p>	<p>Code of Conduct for Councillors</p> <p>Terms of reference for Independent Persons</p> <p>Annual Complaints Report</p> <p>Whistleblowing Policy</p>

	The terms of reference of the Civic Affairs committee includes responsibility for advising on the Council's ethical framework and the promotion of openness, accountability and probity to ensure the highest standards of conduct.	Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy Terms of reference for Civic Affairs Committee
3.3	The behaviour expected of staff and managers will be set out in the Council's competency framework and this will be used as the basis for staff performance appraisal.	Competency Framework Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
3.4	The Council's standing orders and financial regulations will put in place processes designed to ensure that Members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.	Constitution
3.5	The Council will ensure all partnerships with which it is engaged have a set of values or criteria against which decision-making and actions can be judged. It will work with those partnerships to ensure they are open and accountable and have clear governance structures in place.	Partnership Terms of Reference Principles of Partnership Working

4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management.

		Supporting Evidence
4.1	The Council will operate within the legal framework for local councils complying with its statutory duties and making the most of its powers to meet the needs of the City and its residents.	Core Competencies for managers Managers' Job Descriptions Role of Monitoring Officer
4.2	The Council will hold its meetings, and those of its committees and working groups, in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality. The public will be allowed to ask questions at all Council and committee meetings.	Committee Agendas Constitution Committee Forward Plan

4.3	<p>The Council will make sure members of the public have access to information about the workings of the Council. It will make clear what information is routinely published through its Freedom of Information Publication scheme and will respond promptly to requests for information. The Council will publish on its website all responses to Freedom of Information requests.</p>	<p>Publication Scheme Freedom of Information requests monitoring reports Council Website Open data</p>
4.4	<p>The Council will respect the personal data of its citizens, employees, suppliers and others the Council may communicate with in line with the principles of the Data Protection legislation and will make this clear in its own Data Protection Policy. The Council will respect the privacy of members of the public when carrying out investigations and will ensure that privacy is only interfered with when the law permits and there is clear public interest justification.</p>	<p>Data Protection Policy Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Procedure guidance</p>
4.5	<p>The Council will record the deliberation of scrutiny committees and the reasons for Executive and Regulatory decisions and make agenda papers and minutes available on the Council’s website. The Council will also record and publish on the website written questions asked at Council meetings and their answers, and oral questions and answers where these are available.</p>	<p>Agendas and Minutes of Committees Council website</p>

4.6	Officers will use standard report templates for committee and executive reports to help ensure that readers are provided with information that is accurate, complete and unbiased. Reports will make clear the options available so that the implications of all decisions and strategic risks can be assessed before those decisions are made.	Standard committee report templates
4.7	The Council will actively consider the environmental impact of the Council's decisions before those decisions are made.	Environmental Assessment Tool for Council Policies Plans and Projects Environmental Policy Statement Committee reports
4.8	The Council will develop and maintain an effective Scrutiny process to encourage constructive challenge and enhance the Council's performance. It will also have clear protocols about Members' access to information and officer advice to enable them to perform their roles.	Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Committees Protocol
4.9	The Council will have a network of Area Committees to ensure neighbourhood issues are considered in the Council's decision-making processes.	Area Committee terms of reference

4.10	<p>The Council will have a Joint Development Control Committee with the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council for decisions affecting growth sites bordering the City and South Cambridgeshire.</p>	<p>Terms of reference of Joint Development Control Committee</p>
4.11	<p>The Council will have a clear and publicised complaints system, including the appointment of an independent complaints investigator, so that members of the public can express dissatisfaction with Council services and their concerns can be monitored and addressed.</p> <p>It will publish an Annual Complaints report analysing trends in complaints against the Council and what has been done to address them.</p>	<p>Complaints leaflet On-line complaints form Annual Complaints report</p>
4.12	<p>The Council's Civic Affairs Committee will fulfil the core functions of an Audit Committee.</p>	<p>Terms of Reference of the Committee</p>
4.13	<p>The Council will maintain an independent Internal Audit function, with a risk-based annual audit plan, designed to test regularly that the Council's policies and processes operate in practice and that the Council complies with legislation and good practice.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit will produce an annual opinion on the Council's internal control environment to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.</p>	<p>Annual Audit Plan Head of Internal Audit Opinion Annual Governance Statement</p>

	The Head of Internal Audit Opinion will be used to inform an Annual Governance Statement and this will be signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.	
4.14	The Council will also agree an annual work plan with its External Auditors to test the Council's response to major legislation and the soundness of its financial and governance processes. Recommendations arising from internal and external audit and inspection processes will be used to inform future decision-making.	Terms of Reference of Civic Affairs Committee Risk Register Annual Audit letter
4.15	The Council will ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job. It will have a Risk Management Strategy, supplemented by procedures and guidance.	Risk Management Strategy Procedures and guidance on the Council's Intranet
4.16	The Council will undertake systematic risk assessments in all areas of Council activity, including those covered by Health and Safety legislation. It will maintain a corporate risk register detailing the Council's strategic and service risks and review this regularly.	Risk Assessments Risk Register
4.17	The Council will ensure that risk assessment is incorporated into the Council's decision making and Members are advised of the Council's risk profile at key stages.	Risk Management Strategy and Guidance

5. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

		Supporting Evidence
5.1	The Council will seek to maintain its Investors in People accreditation.	IIP Accreditation
5.2	<p>The Council's People Strategy will set out how the Council will recruit, reward and develop its staff to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Staff joining the Council will be offered an induction programme and their training and development needs will be reviewed regularly through the Council's annual performance review process, which applies to all staff.</p>	<p>People Strategy</p> <p>Council Induction Programme</p> <p>Performance Review process</p>
5.3	<p>The Council will have up-to-date job descriptions. It will set and monitor clear objectives for Officers through the annual performance review process.</p> <p>It will agree appropriate remuneration for officers based on an agreed framework of national and local agreements which include job evaluation.</p>	<p>Job Descriptions</p> <p>Performance Review process</p> <p>Competency Framework</p>

5.4	<p>The Council will offer all new Members an induction programme and the opportunity to develop, with the Member Training Champions, a tailored personal development plan to meet their needs. The Council will also provide resources for training, attending conferences/seminars and briefings in-house for all elected Members. It will keep a register of the training received by Members and will involve the Member Training Champions in reviewing training needs and the resources available during the year.</p>	Member Induction Programme
5.5	<p>The Council will encourage and facilitate Members to have appropriate training or briefing before performing certain roles (e.g. dealing with staff recruitment or disciplinary issues, being a member of the Planning or Licensing Committees).</p>	
5.6	<p>The Council will seek expertise from outside the authority when it does not have the necessary skills in-house, making use of peer reviews and other mechanisms for ensuring challenge of Council services.</p>	
5.7	<p>The Council will seek to encourage engagement in its work through a variety of means including through area committees, public representatives on the Equalities Panel, Tenant Representatives on the Housing Scrutiny Committee and involvement of appointed “Independent Persons” in the work of the Civic Affairs Committee.</p> <p>It will also put resources into outreach work through its community development services and support to tenant and leaseholder representatives.</p>	<p>Membership and Terms of Reference of these bodies</p> <p>Public Questions and petitions</p>

6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

		Supporting Evidence
6.1	<p>The Council will ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff.</p> <p>It will promote the role of Councillors and make the public know who the Councillors are, what roles they have on the Council and how to contact them.</p> <p>It will treat everyone fairly and strive to treat all as rational people able to make up their own minds.</p> <p>It will also strive to provide services on the basis of need rather than ability to pay.</p>	<p>Citizen Survey results</p> <p>Public Question Time and Petition procedures</p> <p>Council Website</p> <p>Cambridge Matters</p> <p>Annual Statement</p> <p>Charging policies for services</p>
6.2	<p>The Council will make clear through its website and other Council publications the services that it is responsible for, how people can contact the Council and the service standards they can expect.</p>	<p>Council website</p> <p>Council Tax Leaflet</p> <p>Annual Report</p> <p>Open Door</p> <p>Cambridge Matters</p>
6.3	<p>The Council will undertake surveys of residents to ensure that it has up to date information about their priorities and levels of satisfaction with the Council and its services.</p>	<p>Budget Consultation</p>

6.4	<p>The Council's consultation programme will ensure that the Council proactively seeks the views of a wide range of people and engages with all sections of the community effectively.</p> <p>This will be achieved through a mix of corporate consultation initiatives with more targeted consultation on service specific issues led by relevant departments.</p>	<p>Consultation reports Statement of Community Involvement Code of Best Practice on Consultation and Community Engagement</p>
6.5	<p>The Council will seek to ensure all views are actively considered when making decisions, recognising that it is not always possible to reconcile conflicting viewpoints.</p> <p>The Council will ensure it makes feedback available to consultees on the outcomes of consultation, what has changed as a result and explaining why it has made the decisions it has.</p>	<p>Consultation pages on website Council Publications Code of Best Practice on Consultation and Community Engagement</p>
6.6	<p>The Council will undertake Equality Impact Assessments of all major Council decisions and take action to implement changes required, to ensure that council services and policies consider the diverse needs of its service users and citizens.</p> <p>It has a Single Equalities Scheme covering race, disability, gender age, sexual orientation and religion or belief and an Action Plan will be reviewed annually.</p> <p>It will also use "Mapping Poverty" research data, or other relevant data, to inform decisions about relative deprivation in the City.</p>	<p>Examples of Equality Impact Assessments Annual Review of Equalities Single Equality Scheme Comprehensive Equalities Action Plan Mapping Poverty report</p>

6.7	The Council's Equalities Panel (which has staff, member and public representatives) will help the Council evaluate its success in promoting diversity and meeting a broad range of needs.	Terms of Reference and agendas of meetings
6.8	The Council will enter into compacts with Tenants and the Voluntary Sector agreeing ways of working with these two stakeholder groups. The Compacts will be reviewed on a regular basis.	Compact documents
6.9	The Council will set out in its collective agreements, employment policies and procedures, and terms of reference for forums and meetings involving trade unions, and how it will consult with staff and Trade Unions.	Collective Agreements Employment policies and procedures Trade Union Facilities Agreement
6.10	Members will meet with the Trade Unions in a Joint Staff/ Employer Forum. Each council department will have departmental staff forums and there will be a monthly Joint Trade Unions Group meeting.	Joints Staff /Employer Forum Terms of Reference and Agendas/Joint Trade Unions Group Agendas and Minutes Trade Union Facilities Agreement