Local Code of Corporate Governance

Good governance

Good governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

A Council's Code of Corporate Governance is:

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

Our commitment

Cambridge City Council is committed to upholding the highest possible standards of good corporate governance, believing that good governance leads to high standards of management, strong performance, effective use of resources, increased public involvement and trust in the Council and ultimately good outcomes.

Good governance flows from shared values, culture and behaviour and from systems and structures. This Code of Corporate Governance is a public statement that sets out the framework through which the Council meets its commitment to good corporate governance.

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate cost-effective services.

This local code of governance has been developed in accordance with and is consistent with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government framework, which builds on the seven Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life.

Core principles of good governance

The core governance principles of the council are:-

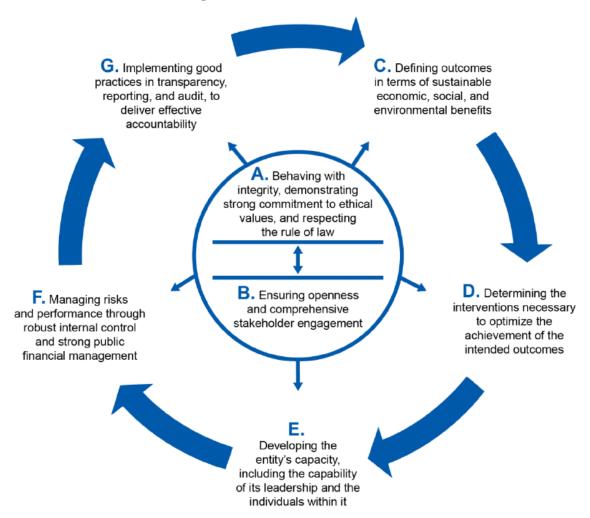
- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

The Council first adopted a Code of Corporate Governance in 2002. It has been reviewed annually since then.

Applying the core principles of good governance

This document describes how the Council achieves the seven principles of good governance and describes how the Council's corporate governance arrangements will be monitored and reviewed.

Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



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.

Principle A – Behaving with Integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
 Behaving with integrity Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical 	The Council expects the authority's leadership - both Members and Officers - to	Constitution
	create a climate of openness, support and respect and to uphold the Council's values.	Register of Interests
values	Standards of conduct and personal behaviour are set out in the Employee Code of	Employee Code of Conduct
Respecting the rule of law	Conduct, the Member Code of Conduct and in the Member/ Officer protocol. An up- to-date register of Member and Officer Senior Officer Interests is maintained. The	Member Code of Conduct
	underlying principles which underpin the Codes of Conduct build upon the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).	Member/Officer Protocol
	The Council has put in place procedures for considering complaints so that	Complaints Procedure
	members of the public can express dissatisfaction with Council services and their concerns can be monitored and addressed.	Annual Complaints Report
	The Council has appointed two "independent persons" to support this, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act, 2011.	
	It publishes an Annual Complaints report analysing trends in complaints against the Council and what has been done to address them.	
	The Council's Civic Affairs Committee fulfils the core functions of an Audit Committee. The Committee is responsible for constitutional issues and ensures that the constitution is monitored and updated when required.	Terms of Reference for Civic Affairs Committee
	The terms of reference of the Civic Affairs committee include responsibility for advising on the Council's ethical framework and the promotion of openness, accountability and probity to ensure the highest standards of conduct.	
	The Council maintains a Whistleblowing policy to enable confidential reporting of	Whistleblowing Policy
	suspected breaches of the Employee Code of Conduct or unethical behaviour. It also maintains a Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy. Both policies are	Prevention of Fraud & Corruption Policy
	reviewed regularly by the Civic Affairs Committee.	Annual Report on the Prevention of Fraud and Corruption

The Council's standing orders and financial regulations 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.

The Council operates 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.

The Head of Legal Practice 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.

The Council ensures that 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.

The Council has a clear Procurement Strategy designed to meet the Council's wider objectives and Contract Procedures Rules designed to deliver robust and fair procurement processes.

The Council undertakes Equality Impact Assessments of all major Council decisions and takes action to implement changes required, to ensure that council services and policies consider the diverse needs of its service users and citizens.

It also uses research data, or other relevant data, to inform decisions about relative deprivation in the City.

The Council has a Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy and a Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021. The Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy sets out the Council's commitment to promoting equality and diversity, including through its role as an employer and a provider of services to the public.

The Single Equality Scheme sets out how the organisation would challenge discrimination and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of its work over the next 3 years. It covers race, disability, gender age, sexual orientation and religion or belief and an Action Plan is reviewed annually.

Constitution

Financial Regulations

Job Description for the Monitoring Officer

Professional Qualifications and training

Procurement Strategy

<u>Examples</u> of <u>Equality Impact</u> Assessments

Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy

Single Equality Scheme 2018-2021, including action plan and annual reports

Principle - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
 Openness Engaging comprehensively with Institutional stakeholders Engaging stakeholders effectively, including citizens and service users 	The Council holds its meetings, and those of its committees and working groups in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality. The public are allowed to ask questions at all Council and committee meetings. The Council records the deliberation of scrutiny committees and the reasons for Executive and Regulatory decisions and makes agenda papers and minutes available on the Council's website. The Council also records and publishes on the website written questions asked at Council meetings and their answers, and oral	Committee Agendas Constitution Committee Forward Plan Agendas and Minutes of Committees Council Website
	questions and answers where these are available. Officers 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 make clear the options available so that the implications of all decisions and strategic risks can be assessed before those decisions are made. The Council has a network of Area Committees to ensure neighbourhood issues are	Standard Committee Report Templates Area Committee Terms of Reference
	considered in the Council's decision-making processes. The Council has 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.	Terms of Reference of Join Development Control Committee
	The Council seeks 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.	Membership and Terms of Reference of these bodies Public Questions and petitions
	It also puts resources into outreach work through its community development services and support to tenant and leaseholder representatives.	

The Council seeks to 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 works with those partnerships to promote open and accountable decision making and to ensure they have clear governance structures in place.

It also ensures 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 operates in accordance with principles of partnership working agreed with our key partner organisations.

The Council ensures that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff.

It promotes the role of Councillors and makes the public know who the Councillors are, what roles they have on the Council and how to contact them.

It treats everyone fairly and strives to treat all as rational people able to make up their own minds.

It also strives to provide services on the basis of need rather than ability to pay.

The Council makes 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.

The Council undertakes 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.

The Council's consultation programme ensures that the Council proactively seeks the views of a wide range of people and engages with all sections of the community effectively.

This is achieved through a mix of corporate consultation initiatives with more targeted consultation on service specific issues led by relevant departments.

Partnership Terms of Reference
Principles of Partnership Working

Survey results

Public Question time and petition procedures

Council Website

Cambridge Matters

Annual Statement

Charging policies

Council Website

Council Tax Leaflet

Annual Report

Open Door Magazine

Budget Consultation

Citizens Survey

Consultation reports

Statement of Community Involvement

Code of Best Practice on Consultation and Community Engagement

The Council seeks to ensure all views are actively considered when making decisions, recognising that it is not always possible to reconcile conflicting viewpoints.

The Council ensures 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.

The Council's Equalities Panel (which has staff, member and public representatives) helps the Council evaluate its success in promoting diversity and meeting a broad range of needs.

The Council enters into compacts with Tenants and the Voluntary Sector agreeing ways of working with these two stakeholder groups. The Compacts are reviewed on a regular basis.

The Council sets out in its collective agreements, employment policies and procedures, and terms of reference for forums and meetings involving trade unions, and how it consults with staff and Trade Unions.

Members meet with the Trade Unions in a Joint Staff/ Employer Forum. Each Strategic Director has staff forums and there are Joint Trade Unions Group meetings.

Consultation pages on website

Council Publications

Code of Best Practice on Consultation and Community Engagement

Terms of Reference and Agendas for these Meetings

Compact documents

Collective Agreements

Employment policies and procedures

Joint Staff/Employer Forum Terms of Reference and Agendas/Joint Trade Unions Group Agendas and Minutes

Trade Union Facilities Agreement

Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
Defining Outcomes Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	The Council has a clear vision for the City and sets objectives to guide the Council's activities. It reviews those objectives each year, through the Annual Statement agreed at the Annual Council meeting and the Corporate Plan. The Council actively considers the environmental impact of the Council's decisions before those decisions are made. The Council agrees with partners a plan for the Local Enterprise Partnership, and contributes to the agreement of priorities for the Health & Wellbeing Board and other relevant countywide partnerships including the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	Vision Annual Statement Environmental Assessment Tool for Council Policies Plans and Projects Environmental Policy Statement Committee reports Budget Setting Report Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Principle - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
Determining InterventionsPlanning Interventions	The Council has a Medium Term Financial Strategy to resource the Council's aspirations and to assess and plan for any financial risks. The strategy is reviewed annually.	Medium Term Financial Strategy
Optimising achievement of intended outcomes	The Council puts service to the public first. The annual business planning process is used to agree the priorities for the Council. The Corporate Plan expresses the strategic objectives for the Council over the financial year 2017/18 and beyond.	Corporate Plan Agendas for Strategy and Resources Committee
	Alongside each of the objectives are detailed the particular outcomes to be achieved and performance measures that provide evidence that the outcomes have been achieved.	Committee
	This information enables members and the services contributing to the delivery of the plan to be clear about the priorities for the Council and assists in decisions about where resources should be focussed.	
	Heads of individual service areas prepare operational plans indicating how they will meet objectives set in the corporate plan and setting out their priorities and work programmes for the year ahead.	Operational Plans
	The Council's overall spending plans are set out in an annual Budget-Setting report for both revenue and capital expenditure.	Budget Setting Report Budget Variance Reports
	There are arrangements in place for regular budget monitoring and the reporting of significant variances to senior management.	Budget variation reports
	The Council works 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. Periodic internal audit reviews consider the effectiveness of controls and efficiency of processes.	
	The Council seeks 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. The Council has LGA membership.	
	Performance against key Performance Indicators for each service are prepared for and presented to the Strategic Leadership Team to consider necessary remedial action.	Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
Developing the Council's capacityDeveloping the capability	The Council sets out a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Members, other Members and Council Officers in its Constitution. The scheme of delegation within the Constitution makes clear what matters are reserved for collective decision-making by full Council.	Constitution
of the entity's leadership and other individuals	A Member/Officer protocol is used to aid effective communication between Officers and Members and to clarify their respective roles and appropriate ways of working.	Member/Officer Protocol Constitution
	The Council's Chief Executive is its Head of Paid Service responsible and accountable to the authority for its operational management.	Constitution
	When working in partnerships the Council ensures that Members are clear about	Partnership Terms of References
	their roles and responsibilities, both individually and collectively, in relation to the partnerships and to the Council.	Principles of Partnership Working
	The behaviour expected of employees is set out in the Council's competency	Competency Framework
	framework and this is used as the basis for performance appraisal. The Council seeks to maintain its Investors in People accreditation.	Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
		Organisational Development Strategy
		IIP Accreditation
	Employees joining the Council are offered an induction programme and their training and development needs are reviewed regularly through the Council's annual performance review process.	Council Induction Programme
		Performance Review Process
	The Council has up-to-date job descriptions. It sets and monitors clear objectives for	Job Descriptions
	Officers through the annual performance review process. It agrees appropriate remuneration for officers based on an agreed framework of national and local agreements which include job evaluation.	Performance Review Process
	The Council offers all new Members an induction programme and the opportunity to develop, with a briefing and development programme to meet their needs. The Council also provides resources for training, attending conferences/seminars and briefings in-house for all elected Members. It keeps a register of the training received by Members and involves Members in reviewing training needs and the resources available during the year.	Member Induction Programme
	The Council encourages and facilitates 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).	Recruitment Guidance

Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
Managing Risk Managing Performance Robust Internal Control Managing data Strong public financial management	The Council has a Risk Management Strategy, supplemented by procedures and guidance. It undertakes systematic risk assessments in all areas of Council activity, including those covered by Health and Safety legislation. It maintains a corporate risk register detailing the Council's strategic and service risks and reviews this regularly. The Council ensures 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. 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 Risk Management Procedures and guidance on the Intranet Risk Assessments
	The Council respects 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 makes this clear in its own Data Protection Policy. The Council has an Information Security group, which is chaired by the Data Protection Officer and Senior Information Risk Officer, to help manage Information Governance Risks and continuous improvement is monitored through a treatment action plan.	Data Protection Policy Information Security Group and Treatment Action Plan. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 – Guidance
	The Council respects the privacy of members of the public when carrying out investigations and ensures that privacy is only interfered with when the law permits and there is clear public interest justification.	
	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.	Job Description for the Head of Finance Compliance with the CIPFA Role of the S151 Officer in Local Government
	The Council develops and maintains an effective Scrutiny process to encourage constructive challenge and enhance the Council's performance.	Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Committees
	It also has clear protocols about Members' access to information and officer advice to enable them to perform their roles.	Member/Officer Protocol

Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability		
Supporting Principles	How does the City Council achieve this?	Supporting Evidence
 Implementing good practice in transparency Implementing good practices in reporting 	The Council makes sure members of the public have access to information about the workings of the Council. It makes clear what information is routinely published through its Freedom of Information Publication scheme and responds promptly to requests for information. The Council publishes on its website all responses to Freedom of Information requests.	Publication Scheme Freedom of Information Requests Monitoring Reports on Council Website – Open Data
Assurance and effective accountability	Each year the Council publishes an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, performance, future plans and financial statements.	Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
	Shared services arrangements with other local authorities or partners document their governance arrangements, which are clear, open and accountable. Business plans and performance is reported to shared service boards and relevant scrutiny committees.	Shared Services Collaboration Agreements
	The Council maintains an independent Internal Audit function, with a risk-based annual 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.	Risk based Internal Audit Plan
	The Head of Internal Audit produces an annual opinion on the Council's internal control environment and the risk management framework to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.	Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion
	The Head of Internal Audit Opinion is used to inform an Annual Governance Statement, which is signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and approved by the Civic Affairs Committee.	Annual Governance Statement
	The Council also agrees 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.	Terms of Reference of Civic Affairs Committee
	Recommendations arising from internal and external audit and inspection processes are used to inform future decision-making.	Risk Register Annual Audit Letter

for Members and considers their advice when setting the Members' Allowance	
Scheme. The Panel operates in an open and transparent manner, making their agendas,	Independent Remuneration Panel agendas, reports and minutes
reports and minutes available to the public. The Members' Allowance Scheme is also made available to the public and on the	Members' Allowance Scheme
Council's website and the scheme is reviewed annually.	Pay Policy Statement

Monitoring and reporting

The Council will undertake an annual review of its governance arrangements to ensure continuing compliance with best practice to provide assurance that corporate governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively in practice. Where reviews of the corporate governance arrangements have revealed gaps, actions will be planned to enhance the governance arrangements accordingly.

The Council will prepare an Annual Governance Statement which will be submitted to the Civic Affairs Committee for consideration and will form part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.

The Governance Statement will include:

- an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance (incorporating the system of internal control) and reference to the authority's code of governance;
- a reference to and assessment of the effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework and the role of those responsible for the development and maintenance of the governance environment;
- an opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework;
- a reference to how issues raised in the previous year's annual governance statement have been resolved; and
- a conclusion including a commitment to monitoring implementation as part of the next annual review.

The Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.

In reviewing and approving the Annual Governance Statement, members will be provided with detailed information regarding the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and system of internal control and how these address the key risks faced by the Council. Those Assurances will be available from a wide range of sources, including internal and external audit, a range of external inspectorates and managers from across the Council.

The Council will continually strive to operate an assurance framework, embedded into its business processes, that maps corporate objectives to risks, controls and assurances. This framework and regular reports on its application and effectiveness will provide members with assurances to support the Annual Governance Statement and will help members to identify whether corporate objectives and significant business risks are being properly managed.

Seven principles for the conduct of individuals in public life

The governance framework is supported by the seven Principles of Public Life, which set the standards of conduct and behaviour to which Councillors and employees should aspire in their day-to-day dealings.

1. Selflessness	Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. Integrity	Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. Objectivity	In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
4. Accountability	Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office
5. Openness	Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. Honesty	Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
7. Leadership	Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.