

Huntingdonshire District Council

Code of Corporate Governance

1. Definition of Corporate Governance

- 1.1 Corporate Governance as defined by CIPFA/SOLACE "...is the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities".
- 1.2 The systems referred to are the policies, management systems, procedures and structures that together determine and control the way in which the District Council manages its business, formulates its strategies and objectives and sets about delivering its services to meet those objectives.

2. Corporate Governance Objectives

- 2.1 The corporate governance objectives of the Council will be:
- (a) To work both for and with the community in an open and effective manner, taking account of the views of all of our stakeholders, regularly reporting on our activities, performance and financial position, and maintaining the highest standards of integrity in all our dealings with the community.
 - (b) To ensure that service delivery arrangements secure continuous improvement of services and that agreed policies, priorities and decisions are implemented on time, in a manner consistent with the needs of users and in the most efficient and effective way.
 - (c) To maintain effective political and managerial structures and processes to govern decision making, ensure the strategic management of the Council, clarify members and employee roles and responsibilities and ensure proper scrutiny of all aspects of performance and effectiveness.
 - (d) To exercise the highest standards of care and control over the assets and resources available, ensuring that these are protected from the risk of loss, damage or misuse, are used in the most efficient, effective and economic way and delivery services in a way that represented the best value for money achievable.
 - (e) To ensure that the highest standards of professionalism and integrity are maintained and that all those associated with the Council demonstrate leadership and commitment in conducting the affairs of the Council in an open and accountable manner.

3. Applying the Principles of Good Governance

- 3.1 In order to meet the objectives above, good corporate governance principles will be applied, supported and reflected across the following five key dimensions of the Council's business:

Community Focus

The Council will

- (a) publish annually and on a timely basis an annual report presenting an objective and understandable account of its financial position and performance.
- (b) publish on a timely basis an objective, balanced and understandable account and assessment of its current performance and plans to maintain and improve service delivery.
- (c) put in place proper arrangements for the independent review of the financial and operational reporting processes.
- (d) put in place proper arrangements designed to encourage individuals and groups from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority and put in place appropriate monitoring processes to ensure that they continue to work in practice.
- (e) make an explicit commitment to openness in all of its dealings, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.
- (f) establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place proper monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively.
- (g) ensure that strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated.

Service Delivery Arrangements

The Council will

- (a) [set standards and targets for performance in the delivery of services on a sustainable basis](#)
- (b) [put in place systems to ensure the Council meets its duties to promote equality.](#)
- (c) put in place sound systems for providing management information for performance measurement purposes.
- (d) monitor and report performance against agreed standards and targets and develop comprehensive and understandable performance plans.

- (e) put in place arrangements to allocate resources according to priorities
- (f) foster effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors, and consider the delivery of services in partnership with such organisations where it is efficient and effective to do so.
- (g) respond positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors and statutory inspectors and put in place arrangements for the effective implementation of agreed actions.

Structures and Processes

The Council will

- (a) establish and maintain a clearly documented protocol governing relationships between members and employees
- (b) ensure that the relative roles and responsibilities of executive, overview and scrutiny, and members generally are clearly defined together with the terms of their remuneration and its review.
- (c) Establish and maintain a clearly documented protocol that explains members roles in community political leadership.
- (d) meet on a formal basis regularly to set the strategic direction of the authority and to monitor service delivery.
- (e) develop and maintain a scheme of delegated or reserved powers, which should include a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for the collective decision of the authority.
- (f) establish and maintain clearly documented and understood management processes for policy development, implementation and review and for decision-making; monitoring and control, and reporting; and formal procedural and financial regulations that govern the conduct of the authority's business.
- (g) put in place arrangements for members to be properly trained.
- (h) make the Chief Executive responsible for all aspects of strategic and corporate management.
- (i) make each Director and Head of Service responsible for specific aspects of operational management.

- (j) make the Corporate Director Commerce & Technology responsible 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.
- (k) appoint a Monitoring Officer who shall be responsible for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with.
- (l) Define clearly in writing the roles and responsibilities of Directors and Heads of Service, together with the terms of their remuneration and its review.

Risk Management and Internal Control

The Council will

- (a) develop and maintain robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks that involves the participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.
- (b) put in place effective risk management systems, including systems of internal control and an internal audit function.
- (c) ensure that its services are delivered by trained and experienced people.
- (d) put in place effective arrangements for an objective review of the effectiveness of risk management and internal control, including internal audit.
- (e) maintain an objective and professional relationship with their external auditors and statutory inspectors.
- (f) publish annually an objective, balanced and understandable statement and assessment of the authority's risk management and internal control mechanisms and their effectiveness in practice.

Standards of Conduct

The Council will

- (a) develop and adopt formal codes of conduct defining standards of personal behaviour to which individual members, employees, and agents of the authority are required to subscribe and put in place appropriate systems and processes which seek to ensure that they are complied with.

- (b) introduce arrangements that endeavour to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not being influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to monitor their operation.
- (c) Put in place arrangements that seek to ensure that the procedures and operations dealing with standards of conduct are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and best practice, and to monitor their continuing compliance in practice.
- (d) put in place arrangements for whistleblowing to which staff and all those contracting with the council have access.

4. Statement of Assurance

- 4.1 To reassure stakeholders that they can have confidence in the decision-making and management processes of the Council, and as further evidence of its corporate commitment to good governance the Council will publish ~~issue~~ an annual statement of assurance on corporate governance within its ~~, as part of the~~ annual Statement of Accounts. ~~and will work towards publishing it in conjunction within the annual Best Value Performance Plan.~~