

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Governance

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

It 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 its communities.

This local code of governance is based on Delivering Good Governance in Local Government issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers in June 2007.

The Core Principles of Good Governance

These are:

- a) Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- b) Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- c) Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- d) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- e) Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
- f) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Applying the Core Principles of Good Governance

The six core principles each have a number of supporting principles, which in turn have specific requirements as set out in the following tables:

CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principle	
Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area	
Supporting principle:	Specific requirements to:
exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users	develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision
	review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications on the authority's governance arrangements
	ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties
	publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance
ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning	decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available
	put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery
ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money	decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.

CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principle	
Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles	
Supporting principle:	Specific requirements to:
ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function	set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice
	set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers
ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard	determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required
	make a chief executive (or equivalent) responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management
	develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained
	make a senior officer (the section 151 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
	make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with
ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other	develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles
	set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable)

	<p>ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery</p>
	<p>ensure that the organisation's vision, 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</p>
	<p>when working in partnership, ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority</p>
	<p>when working in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership - ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions

CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principle	
Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour	
Supporting principle:	Specific requirements to:
ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance	ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect
	ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols
	put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice
ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective	develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both for the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners
	put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice
	develop and maintain an effective standards committee
	use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority
	in pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.

CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principle	
Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk	
Supporting principle:	Specific requirements to:
being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny	develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and of any organisation for which it is responsible.
	develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based
	put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice
	develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee
	ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints
having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs	ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.
	ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately
ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place	ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs
	ensure that effective arrangements for whistle-blowing are in place to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access

<p>using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area</p>	<p>actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities</p>
	<p>recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law</p>
	<p>observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice - into their procedures and decision making processes</p>

CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principle	
Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective	
Supporting principle:	Specific requirements to:
making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles	provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis
	ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the organisation
developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as individuals and as a group	assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively
	develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed
	ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the authority as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs
encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal	ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority
	ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development

CIPFA/SOLACE Core Principle	
Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability	
Supporting principle:	Specific requirements to:
exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships	make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what
	consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required
	produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function
taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning	ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively
	hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality.
	ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands
	establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result
	on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period
	ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so

making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.