

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Introduction

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Council's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal. To this end, the Council has adopted this code of corporate governance.

The Council will seek to ensure that the following principles underpin the operation of the Council in working for the people of Cambridgeshire:

- openness and inclusivity
- accountability
- integrity

The Council in carrying out its business will seek to aspire to the standards and aspirations set out below under the following headings;

- Community Focus
- Service Delivery Arrangements
- Structure and Processes
- Risk Management and Internal Control
- Standards of Conduct

Community Focus

The Council in the exercise of its powers and duties will always seek to:

- work for and with local communities,
- exercising leadership,, and
- undertake an 'ambassadorial' role to promote the wellbeing of their area, where appropriate.

The Council will maintain effective arrangements:

- for explicit accountability to stakeholders for the authority's performance and its effectiveness in the delivery of services and the sustainable use of resources
- to demonstrate integrity in the authority's dealings in building effective relationships and partnerships with other public agencies and the private/ voluntary sectors to demonstrate openness in all their dealings
- to demonstrate inclusivity by communicating and engaging with all sections of the community to encourage active participation

- to develop and articulate a clear and up-to-date vision and corporate strategy in response to community needs.

Service Delivery Arrangements

The Council will strive to achieve continuous improvement in all its services, and that agreed policies are implemented and decisions carried out by maintaining arrangements which:

- discharge the Council's accountability for service delivery at a local level
- ensure effectiveness through setting targets and measuring performance
- demonstrate integrity in-dealing with service users and developing partnerships to ensure the 'right' provision of services locally
- demonstrate openness and inclusivity through consulting with key stakeholders, including service users
- are flexible so that they can be kept up to date and adapted to accommodate change and meet user wishes.

Structures and Processes

The Council will establish effective political and managerial structures and processes to govern decision-making and the exercise of authority within the organisation and will

- define the roles and responsibilities of members and officers to ensure accountability, clarity and good ordering of the Council's business
- ensure that there is proper scrutiny and review of all aspects of performance and effectiveness
- demonstrate integrity by ensuring a proper balance of power and authority
- document clearly such structures and processes and to ensure that they are communicated and understood to demonstrate openness and inclusivity
- ensure such structures and processes are kept up to date and adapted to accommodate change.

Risk Management and Internal Control

The Council will establish and maintain a systematic strategy, framework and processes for managing risk which will:

- include making public statements to stakeholders on the authority's risk management strategy, framework and processes to demonstrate accountability
- include mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing effectiveness against agreed standards and targets and the operation of controls in practice

- demonstrate integrity by being based on robust systems for identifying, profiling, controlling and monitoring all significant strategic and operational risks
- display openness and inclusivity by involving all those associated with planning and delivering services, including partners
- include mechanisms to ensure that the risk management and control process is monitored for continuing compliance to ensure that changes in circumstances are accommodated and that it remains up to date.

Standards of Conduct

The Council believes that openness, integrity and accountability of individuals within the Council form the cornerstone of effective corporate governance and that the reputation of the Council depends on the standards of behaviour of everyone in it, whether members, employees or agents contracted to it.

The Council will try to ensure that members and senior officers:

- exercise leadership by conducting themselves as role models for others within the authority to follow
- define the standards of personal behaviour that are expected from members and staff and all those involved in service delivery, and put in place arrangements to ensure:
 - accountability, through establishing systems for investigating breaches and disciplinary problems and taking action where appropriate, including arrangements for redress
 - effectiveness in practice through monitoring their compliance
 - that objectivity and impartiality are maintained in all relationships to demonstrate integrity
- ensure that such standards are documented and clearly understood to display openness and inclusivity and are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are kept up to date.

This Code of Corporate Governance is consistent with the principles and requirements of the Framework prepared by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) and set out in the publication *Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance (CIPFA) - 2001*.