



Code of Corporate Governance

Foreword

from the Leader of the Council

I am pleased to endorse this Code of Corporate Governance, which sets out the commitment of Cambridgeshire County Council to continue to uphold the highest possible standards of good governance. I hope you will find that the document clearly demonstrates our drive to ensure this.

Good governance is about how the County 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 way. Good governance is key to achieving our vision for Cambridgeshire.



Councillor Jill Tuck
Leader of the Council



Good governance

Good governance is about how the County 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.

Our commitment

Cambridgeshire County 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 results.

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, and it is underpinned by the Council's shared values:

- ◆ **Accountability** We will be open and transparent, listening and communicating clearly and taking responsibility for our actions
- ◆ **Respect** In working with each other, our partners, residents and service users, we will treat each other as we would like others to treat us, recognising and embracing differences and taking account of the full range of opinions
- ◆ **Integrity** We will behave honestly, and demonstrate reliability by promising only what we can deliver and delivering what we promise
- ◆ **Value for money** We will balance cost and quality to ensure all our resources make the maximum possible impact.
- ◆ **Excellence** Working with partners where appropriate, we will ensure services of the highest quality
- ◆ **Equity** We will treat people fairly, valuing and responding to their diverse backgrounds and needs

The Governance Framework

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.

Corporate governance at Cambridgeshire is based on the following principles¹, which build on the Ten Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life² (see **Appendix A** on page 22).

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

This document describes how the Council demonstrates its commitment to these six principles, indicates where more information can be obtained, and describes how and by whom the Council's corporate governance arrangements will be monitored and reviewed.

¹ Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. CIPFA / SOLACE 2007.

² Based on the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee).

Supporting principles

Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens

Ensuing that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To develop and promote its purpose and vision

To review on a regular basis its vision for the local area and its impact on the governance arrangements

To ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties

To communicate the Council's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance on a timely basis

To measure the quality of service for users and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available

To put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery

Key elements of the Governance Framework

[Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007 - 2021](#)
[Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy](#)
[Integrated Plan 2009](#)

[Strategic Partnerships quarterly reports to Cabinet](#)
[Report on Partnerships and implications for Governance, September 2008](#)
(Cambridgeshire Together)

[Annual Audit Letter](#)
[Externally audited accounts](#)
[Finance and Performance Reports to Cabinet](#)
[CPA 2008](#)
[Integrated Planning process](#)
[Your Cambridgeshire \(residents' newspaper\)](#)
[Annual Report](#)

[Integrated Plan 2009](#)
[Resource and Performance Reports to Cabinet](#)
[Listening and Involving Strategy](#)
[Customer Feedback](#)
[The Place Survey](#)
[CPA 2008](#)

[Whistleblowing Policy](#)

Supporting principles

Cambridgeshire's commitment

Key elements of the Governance Framework

To measure value for money and make sure that the Council and its key partnerships have the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively.

To measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.

Use of Resources

Integrated Plan 2009

CPA 2008

Principle Two Councillors and officers working together to achieve a common purpose, with clearly defined functions and roles

Supporting principles

Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Council and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function

Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between Councillors and Officers and that the responsibilities of Councillors and Officers are carried out to a high standard

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To 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

To set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and senior officers

To 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

To make the Chief Executive responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management

To develop protocols to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Constitution

Protocol on Member / Officer relations

Scheme of Delegation

Members' Code of Conduct

Officers' Code of Conduct

Constitution

Scheme of Delegation

Key Decisions - Forward Plan

Spokespersons arrangements

Policy Development Groups

Protocol on Member / Officer relationships

Officers' Code of Conduct (Constitution)

Scheme of delegation

To be developed

Supporting principles

Cambridgeshire's commitment

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Ensuring the relationships between the Council, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other

To make the Corporate Director: Finance, Property and Performance (as Section 151 Officer) 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

Section 151 Officer responsibilities

To make the Head of Legal Services (as Monitoring Officer) responsible for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with

Monitoring Officer responsibilities

The Chairman of the Council to act as the conscience of the Council

Constitution

To develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles

Protocol on Member / Officer relationships
Constitutional provisions for Policy Development Groups and Spokes Meetings

To set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an independent remuneration panel

Pay and conditions policies and practice
Members allowances arrangements
Constitution

To ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery

CORVU performance monitoring system
Performance reports to Cabinet

To 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

Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007 - 2021
Listening and Involving Strategy
Budget Consultation

Supporting principles

Cambridgeshire's commitment

Key elements of the Governance Framework

When working in partnership to ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority

When working in partnership:

- to ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership;
- to ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.

Review of partnerships and implications for Governance (Cambridgeshire Together)

Resource and Performance Reports to Cabinet

Supporting principles

Ensuring that Councillors and Officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance

Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To ensure that the Council's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect.

To ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Councillors and employees, of work between Councillors and employees and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols.

To put in place arrangements to ensure that Councillors 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.

To develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and employees reflecting public expectations and communicate these with Councillors, employees, the community and partners.

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Cambridgeshire's Values

Ethical Framework

Members'/Officers' Code of Conduct

Ethical Framework

Protocol on Member / Officer relationships

Whistleblowing policy

Standards Committee

Standing Orders

Codes of conduct

Financial regulations

Register of Interests (available at Council offices during office hours)

Declaration of Interests in meetings

Section 5 - Code of Conduct

Cambridgeshire's Values

Members'/Officers' Code of Conduct

Ethical Framework

Standards Committee

Supporting principles

Cambridgeshire's commitment

Key elements of the Governance Framework

To 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

To develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee

To 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, to 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.

Codes of conduct

Standards Committee

Internal Audit Reports to Audit and Accounts Committee

Terms of reference for the Standards Committee as set out in the Constitution

Reports and meetings of the Standards Committee Annual report to Council

Cambridgeshire's Values

Decision-making practices

Ethical Framework

Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007-2021

Review of partnerships and implications for Governance (Cambridgeshire Together)

Principal Four Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Supporting principles

Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that organisations for which it is responsible.

To develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.

To 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.

To develop and maintain an effective Audit and Accounts Committee which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions.

To ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Scrutiny meetings agenda and minutes

CPA Assessment Report (October 2007)

Annual reports to Council

Constitution

Scheme of Delegation

Members' code of conduct

Register of Interests (available at Council offices during office hours)

Declaration of interests in meetings

Guidance on Member / Officer relationships

Terms of reference of Audit and Accounts Committee

Annual Assessment of effectiveness

Corporate Complaints Process

Whistleblowing Policy

Standards Committee Terms of Reference

Principal Four Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Supporting principles

Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs

Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To 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

To 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

To 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

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Cabinet minutes and agendas

Constitution part 2, article 15

Risk Management Strategy

Governance of business developments

Cabinet review of Strategic Risk Register

Principal Four Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Supporting principles

Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To ensure that arrangements are in place for whistleblowing to which employees and all those contracting with the Authority have access

To 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

To recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law

To 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.

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Whistle-blowing Policy

Constitution

Monitoring Officer provisions

Constitution

Monitoring Officer provisions

Monitoring Officer provisions

Ethical Framework

Constitution

Principle Five Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

Supporting principles

Making sure that Councillors and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles

Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as individuals and as a group

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Councillors and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis

To 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 authority.

To assess the skills required by Members and Officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively

To develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinize and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed

To ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Investors in People (IiP) Repor
People Strategy

Section 151 Officer responsibilities

Monitoring Officer role

Structure of the Council

Constitution - scheme of delegation to Officers

Scrutiny review of Member training and development of 4 November 2008 and Response

Member training and development Cabinet response to scrutiny review

Member training and development Cabinet response to scrutiny review

Principle Five Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

Supporting principles

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

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Authority

To ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Neighbourhood panels

Your Cambridgeshire (residents' newspaper)

2009 Election publicity

Member training and development Cabinet response to Scrutiny review

People Strategy

Principle Six Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Supporting principles

Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships

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

Cambridgeshire's commitment

To make clear to themselves, all employees and the community to whom they are accountable and for what

To consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required

To produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function

To ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality.

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007 –2021
The Place Survey

Joint Accountability Committee to scrutinise 'Cambridgeshire Together'

Annual report to Council

Vision for Cambridgeshire 2007–2021

Listening and Involving Strategy

Constitution for Public meetings

Public Question Time and Petitions

Constitution

Your Cambridgeshire (residents newspaper)

Annual Report to Council

Cabinet's Forward Plan

Annual Accounts available for inspection

Neighbourhood Panels

The Place Survey

Supporting principles

Cambridgeshire's commitment

Key elements of the Governance Framework

To 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.

To 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, to 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.

[Listening and Involving Strategy](#)

[Constitution for public meetings](#)

[Public Question Time](#) and [Petitions](#)

[Constitution](#)

[Neighbourhood Panels](#)

[Youth Parliament](#)

[Cambridgeshire Together](#)

[The Place Survey](#)

[Participatory Budgeting Pilots \(Hunts\) – Huntingdon North Ward](#)

[Partnership framework – LAA](#)

[Listening and Involving Strategy](#)

[Big Plan](#)

[The Place Survey](#)

[Integrated Plan](#)

[Statement of Accounts](#)

[Annual Report](#)

Supporting principles

Cambridgeshire's commitment

Key elements of the Governance Framework

Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibilities to employees

To ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its employees 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

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

Constitution

Listening and Involving Strategy

Constitution for public meetings

Public Question Time and Petitions

Freedom of information

Publication of forward plans, agendas and meetings

Constitution

People Strategy

Ten principles for the conduct of individuals in public life

The governance framework is underpinned by the ten **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 (these are annexed to the **Members' Code of Conduct**).

1 Selflessness

Councillors and employees should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

2 Honesty and integrity

Councillors and employees should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

3 Objectivity

Councillors and employees should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

4 Accountability

Councillors and employees should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

5 Openness

Councillors and employees should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

6 Personal judgement

Councillors may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

7 Respect for others

Councillors and employees should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.

8 Duty to uphold the law

Councillors and employees should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

9 Stewardship

Councillors and employees should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

10 Leadership

Councillors and employees should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.



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