

DRAFT LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (Updated 08/6/2015)

Introduction

Good governance is crucial as it leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and ultimately good outcomes for citizens and service users. Further, good governance enables an authority to pursue its aims effectively whilst controlling and managing risk.

Brighton & Hove City Council has a robust Constitution and associated governance documents and arrangements in place. The purpose of this Local Code of Corporate Governance is to set out for members and officers the main principles of good governance that the Council is committed to and to highlight the key policies and processes that are in place to ensure these principles are followed.

What is good governance?

Corporate Governance has been described as being:-

‘how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.’¹

The Council operates through a governance framework which brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. Development of a Local Code of Governance helps to ensure that proper systems and processes are in place and serves as a means of increasing credibility, accountability and public confidence in the organisation.

The Council’s Purpose, Ambition, Priorities and Values

The Council recognises that establishing and maintaining a culture of good governance is as important as putting in place a framework of policies and procedures. The Council expects members and staff to uphold the highest standards of conduct and behaviour and to act with openness, integrity and accountability when carrying out their duties. The Council’s corporate Plan 2015-2019 sets out the Council’s purpose, ambition, priorities and values.

¹ Delivering good governance in local Government Framework’ CIPFA/SOLACE

The Council's Purpose, Ambition, Priorities and Values

The Council's purpose is to provide strong civic leadership for the wellbeing and aspiration of Brighton & Hove.

We will be successful if we are judged to deliver:

A good life

Ensuring a city for all ages, inclusive of everyone and protecting the most vulnerable.

A well run city

Keeping the city safe, clean, moving and connected.

A vibrant economy

Promoting a world class economy with a local workforce to match.

A modern council

Providing open civic leadership and effective public services.

Underpinning this purpose are six values which describe the professional behaviour required to modernise the council. They are:

- Respect
- Collaboration
- Efficiency
- Openness
- Creativity
- Customer Focus

In addition the Council has four principles built on those shared by the city's partnerships, to deliver our purpose. These are:

Public accountability

A council that works with, and is answerable to, citizens and partners.

Citizen focused

A council that starts from the citizen's point of view, making services simpler, more connected and more personal.

Increasing equality

A more equal city, where everyone is respected and shares in the city's prosperity.

Active citizenship

A city people take pride in, where citizens, communities and businesses are active in addressing things that matter to them.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance

This Local Code is based upon the guidance published jointly by CIPFA² and SOLACE³ entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework'. The Guidance sets out six core principles of corporate governance, together with various supporting principles in respect of each core principle. The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance incorporates these principles and identifies good practice and other means of demonstrating the Council's compliance with them.

Principle 1

The Council will focus on its purpose, on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

To do this we will

- Exercise of strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Council's purpose, vision and intended outcomes for residents, visitors and other service users;
- Ensure that users receive a high quality of service, whether directly, in partnership or otherwise;
- Ensure that the Council makes best use of resources and tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.

Principle 2

The Council's Members and officers will work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

To do this we will

- Ensure effective leadership throughout the Council with clear roles for Committees and Sub-committees;
- Ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between Members and officers and that their respective responsibilities are carried out to a high standard;
- Ensure relationships between the Council, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.

Principle 3

The Council will promote its values and demonstrate the value of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

To do this we will

² The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

³ The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers.

- Oversea Council arrangements to ensure Members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance;
- Ensure that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.

Principle 4

The Council will take informed and transparent decisions that promote value for money and are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

To do this we will

- Be rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and will listen and act on the outcome of constructive scrutiny
- Provide good-quality information, advice and support so that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs
- Ensure that an effective risk management system is in place use our legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in its area.

Principle 5

The Council will develop the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective

To do this we will

- Make sure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles
- Develop the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluate their performance, as individuals and as a group
- Encourage new talent for membership of the Council so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal

Principle 6

The Council will engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

We will do this by

- 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 dialogues with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly, in partnership or commissioning.
- Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

Monitoring and Review

The key policies and processes that underpin the Council's compliance with these principles are set out in **Appendix 1**.

All Members and officers of the Council share responsibility for good governance. The Monitoring Officer and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources will jointly report annually on compliance with this Code and the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements. The report will also be the basis for the production of the Annual Governance Statement which will be published in the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. The Audit and Standards Committee is responsible for the oversight of ethical issues and for approving the Annual Governance Statement prepared jointly by the Monitoring Officer and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources.

APPENDIX ONE

Council policies and processes linked to compliance with the six core principles of Corporate Governance

Council policy or process	1. Purpose, vision & outcomes	2. Clearly defined function & roles	3. Values, good governance, conduct & behaviour	4. Decisions value for money, scrutiny & managing risk	5. Capacity capability	6. Engagem ent, accountab ility
Sustainable Community Strategy	✓					✓
City Plan	✓					✓
Corporate Plan 2015-2019	✓	✓				✓
Directorate Plans	✓				✓	
Service Plans	✓				✓	
Corporate values and training programme	✓		✓		✓	
Brighton & Hove Connected	✓					✓
Greater Brighton City Deal	✓					✓
Health and Wellbeing Board	✓					✓
Corporate communications protocol	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Corporate complaints procedure	✓		✓	✓		
Financial regulations and financial procedures	✓		✓	✓		
Medium term Financial Strategy	✓					
Annual budget and TBM monitoring reports	✓			✓		
Annual statement of accounts	✓					
Internal audit reviews	✓					
Benchmarking	✓				✓	
Contract Standing Orders	✓			✓		
Counter fraud strategy	✓			✓		
Council modernisation programme	✓			✓	✓	
Council's constitution		✓	✓	✓		
Decision records		✓		✓		✓
Scheme of authorisation		✓				
Officer job descriptions		✓	✓		✓	

and performance review process (PDP and training plans)						
Annual staff survey		✓	✓		✓	✓
Information published under Local Government Transparency Code		✓				
Social media policy and guidelines		✓				
Whistleblowing policy			✓	✓		
Annual Governance Statement			✓			
Annual HR report			✓		✓	
Publication Scheme				✓		✓
Member development induction and training programme				✓	✓	
Corporate business planning and risk management framework				✓	✓	
Risk management strategy				✓		
Strategic risk register				✓		
Directorate and service risk registers				✓	✓	
Insurance policies				✓		
Health & safety policies and procedures				✓		
Workforce strategy				✓	✓	✓
Recruitment policies and procedures					✓	✓
City management Board						✓
Fairness Commission						✓