Coventry City Council

Code of Corporate Governance

Introduction

Governance is about the arrangements that organisations put in place to make sure that their aims are defined and achieved. For local authorities it is also about making sure that councils act in the public interest.

Coventry City Council works hard to ensure that its arrangements for governance are robust and meet good practice. This Code of Corporate Governance sets out the Council's commitment to the principles of good governance and how it ensures that they are being followed.

Good Corporate Governance

In 2016, the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) updated their guidance on Corporate Governance and produced published the new *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework*. This provides a best practice framework for local authorities to help make sure that their resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities, that there is sound and inclusive decision-making and that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve the desired outcomes for service users and communities. It sets out the principles that underpin good governance and how local authorities can assure themselves and others that they are meeting them.

Coventry City Council's Code of Corporate Governance

Coventry City Council's Code of Corporate Governance adopts the principles set out in the new CIPFA/SOLACE Framework and explains what these mean for the way the Council operates. The Code provides the framework for the key policies, plans, protocols and systems which support good governance across the Council.

Demonstrating the principles of good Corporate Governance

Principles	Sub principles	The Council does this by
A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	Behaving with integrity	Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and creating a culture which focuses on acting in the public interest.
	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	Ensuring that Members, officers and external service providers understand and demonstrate the ethical values of the Council, which are set out in our policies and procedures.
	Respecting the rule of Law	Ensuring members and officers demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law and adhere to relevant laws and regulations.
B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Openness	Ensuring an open, accessible and transparent culture which underpins decision-making.
	Engaging with citizens and stakeholders	Effectively engaging with citizens, service users and stakeholders, ensuring that communication and engagement methods are effective and that feedback mechanisms are in place.
C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits	Defining outcomes	The Council has a clear vision which sets out what it is planning to achieve and how it will monitor and report progress.
	Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impacts of policies, plans and decisions and ensure fair access to services.
D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Identifying the right course of action	Ensuring decision makers have the information they need.
	Planning action	Establishing and implementing robust planning and performance cycles, underpinned by effective resource planning.
	Maximising outcomes	Ensuring that resources are used in the most effective way to support the Council's priorities

Principles	Sub principles	The Council does this by
E: Developing the Council's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.	Developing capacity	Maximising the capacity of the Council by making sure its assets, resources, partnerships and employees are as effective as possible.
	Developing strong leaders	Developing the leadership skills and capacity of members, senior managers and employees to meet the challenges facing the Council.
F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Managing risk	Recognising that risk management is an integral part of Council business and decision-making.
	Managing performance	Monitoring service delivery effectively and ensuring an effective scrutiny function is in place to provide constructive challenge.
	Robust internal control	Ensuring effective arrangements for risk management, counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place and that the Audit and Procurement Committee provides effective assurance.
	Managing data	Ensuring effective arrangements are in place to identify information assets and risks and for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data.
	Strong financial management	Ensuring financial management supports short-term financial and operational performance as well as longer-term aims.
G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability	Implementing good practise in transparency	Ensuring reports used for decision making are clear, balanced and easy to read.
	Implementing good practices in reporting	Reporting regularly on performance, value for money and use of resources.
	Assurance and effective accountability	Ensuring that learning, improvements and corrective actions from audit, peer challenges, reviews and inspections are acknowledged and appropriate changes are made.

Review of the Code and Governance Arrangements

Local authorities are required to conduct a review at least once every financial year of the effectiveness of their systems of internal control and to report on this review with its Statement of Accounts. The Code of Corporate Governance forms a key part of this process.

To ensure that the Code and the Council's policies, plans, protocols and systems are kept up to date, governance arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis against best practice as set out in the national framework. The purpose of the review will be to ensure that the Council's governance arrangements meet the principles of the code, that there are systems and processes in place to measure their effectiveness and that gaps in policies, performance or assurance are identified and appropriate actions developed. The review will follow the cycle set out below:

September - December	Review of Code of Corporate Governance to include: • what is in place to demonstrate that the principles in the Code are being met • what is in place to measure the effectiveness of systems and processes • any gaps in policies, performance or assurance and identification of any actions
Beginning of April	Guidance for producing directorate Statements of Internal Control prepared, incorporating any issues identified in the review of the Code
During April	Directorates produce Statements of Internal Control as part of Annual Governance Statement
May/June	Audit and Procurement Committee approve the statement of accounts and Annual Governance Statement, incorporating issues and actions arising from the review of the Code and Statements of Internal Control

The Council's Audit and Procurement Committee is responsible for approving the Annual Governance Statement alongside the Statement of Accounts.