

**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.

The City Council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance in line with the national best practice framework. This 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 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.

This document summarises the key arrangements the Council has in place to meet the requirements of the Code, measures undertaken during the last year and actions planned for the coming year to strengthen them.

Key issues identified will be incorporated in the preparation of the Statements of Internal Control which will form part of the Annual Governance Statement

Demonstrating the principles of good Corporate Governance

Principles	Sub principles	Summary of position, progress and actions required
A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	Behaving with integrity	The Constitution sets out how the Council will operate in line with the law including the powers and delegations that are in place. All formal reports include legal implications and require sign off by Legal Services. Codes of Conduct for Members and officers are in place. The Ethics Committee regularly monitors and reviews declarations of officer and member gifts, hospitality, declarations of interests and complaints against members and makes recommendations for good practice. The Audit Committee monitors and makes recommendations for good practice on the Council's anti-fraud, corruption and bribery activity.
	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values	<p>Progress during 2019/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appraisal process for employees based on behaviours now embedded and 94.7% of employees received an appraisal in 2018/19. • New "Cause for Concern" page on the intranet launched February 2020 to provide central source of information and signposting for any concerns to be raised including whistleblowing, fraud and corruption. • The Constitutional Advisory Panel has reviewed the Member Code of Conduct and recommended changes to reflect best practice highlighted by the Committee on Standards in Public Life which will be considered by Council in March 2020. • The Constitutional Advisory Panel has reviewed the Contract Procedure Rules and Finance Procedure Rules and recommended changes which will be considered by Council in March 2020. <p>Actions proposed for 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Code of Good Planning Practice for Members and Employees dealing with Planning Matters • Refresh Member Code of Conduct Training • Review of Bribery and Corruption arrangements as part of audit plan
	Respecting the rule of Law	

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B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Openness	<p>The Council's priorities are set out in the One Coventry Plan which is published on the Council's website and regularly reviewed by Cabinet and Scrutiny. The reports on which decisions are based are publicly available and set out the information on which recommendations are based and appropriate meetings are open to members of the public. The Council's website includes a wide range of information including how to access services, engage with the Council and respond to consultations which is supported by a wide range of other activities and approaches.</p> <p>Progress during 2019/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched Let's Talk Coventry, a digital engagement platform which provides an easy and coordinated way to facilitate engagement and consultation throughout the Council. This is helping to inform the sensitive delivery of projects where the Council and communities work together • Updated the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to include the residents' voice, collected via conversations with communities in addition to the data. <p>Actions proposed for 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out the Household Survey • Review and update the Council's Publication Scheme • Implement a new system to manage Freedom of Information and Subject Access requests
	Engaging with citizens and stakeholders	

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C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits	Defining outcomes	<p>The Council's vision and priorities are set out in the One Coventry Plan which is published on the Council's website. The plan and progress against it is regularly reviewed by Cabinet and Scrutiny. The priorities in the Plan balance social, economic and environmental objectives to support a sustainable Coventry. A consistent approach to the application of Social Value is being promoted across the city through the One Coventry Partnership</p> <p>Progress during 2019/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of a revised set of equality objectives following consultation and engagement • Impact on Climate Change is now an explicit consideration in all formal decisions <p>Actions proposed for 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Climate Change Strategy • Review and update the Social Value and Sustainability Policy • Review and update Policy Framework
	Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	
D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Identifying the right course of action	<p>The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy is reviewed annually by Scrutiny and reviewed and approved by Cabinet and sets out the financial planning foundations that support delivery of the Council's vision and priorities and the financial and policy context for the Council's Budget process. Following consultation with the public and partners, in February Council approves the annual budget which sets the allocation of revenue and capital resources to meet the Council's identified priorities.</p> <p>Progress during 2019/20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFS and budget approved • Annual review of priorities and actions against One Council Plan <p>Actions proposed for 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Social Value and Sustainability Policy
	Planning action	
	Maximising outcomes	

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	<p>The Senior leadership has been broadened and strengthened through stronger arrangements for the Strategic Management Board, Corporate Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team. A revised management structure will be introduced from April 2020 to further support the One Coventry approach. A comprehensive Leadership Development programme is in place and embedded, supported by a corporate learning and development offer.</p> <p>Progress during 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Equality, Diversity and inclusion Policy provides the foundation for employment policies, procedures and practice. • A programme of activity to co-create One Coventry Values has been undertaken during the year. <p>Actions proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme in place for revision of workforce policies • Implement One Coventry Values from April 2020 • Member Training Strategy and programme being developed for consideration and approval by Council
	Developing strong leaders	
F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Managing risk	<p>The Council has a range of robust policies, frameworks and monitoring frameworks to manage risks and performance and ensure robust internal control. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk management policy and framework: the Corporate risk register is reviewed regularly by the Strategic Management Board and Audit and Procurement Committee and managing risk is a key element of decision-making for major projects and programmes. • Robust arrangements to monitor progress against corporate priorities set out in the One Coventry Council plan and at service level. Regular reporting to Cabinet and scrutiny has been enhanced by the development of the real time performance dashboard and citywide intelligence hub which are available on the Council's website. • An annual audit plan which takes into account the Council's corporate risk register and operational risks identified by management across the Council. The Audit and Procurement Committee is responsible for approving the annual audit plan, monitoring its completion and receives reports on the
	Managing performance	
	Robust internal control	
	Managing data	
	Strong financial management	

Principles	Sub principles	The Council does this by
		<p>findings of audit reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements in place to identify information assets and risks and for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data. The implementation of the Information Management Strategy is overseen by the Information Management Strategy Group and supported by Data Protection and Information Governance Teams. • Robust financial management arrangements which include a Medium Term Financial Strategy that provides the financial planning foundations that support delivery of the Council's vision and priorities, an annual budget setting process and regular monitoring and reporting <p>Progress during 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has been undertaken during the year to ensure that directorate risk registers are in place across the organisation <p>Actions proposed for 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review risk management framework • Update of Fraud Risk Assessment (as part of audit plan) • Develop and implement action plan arising from external review of Scrutiny
G: Implementing good practices in transparency,	Implementing good practise in transparency	The Council produces and publishes an annual governance statement which explains how Coventry City Council meets its corporate governance requirements

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reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability	Implementing good practices in reporting Assurance and effective accountability	<p>and details key governance and control issues identified that the Council faces in the coming year. The annual External Auditor's report provides the Audit and Procurement Committee with assurance on the accuracy of the Council's financial statements and gives an opinion on the Council's arrangements to ensure value for money.</p> <p>A self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards is carried annually as part of the annual internal audit report which is considered at the Audit and Procurement Committee and Full Council. Action plans are developed to address any areas for improvement.</p> <p>The Council uses the findings of inspections and reviews to continue to improve its services</p> <p>Progress during 2019/20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to implement recommendations from the Local Government Association Peer Review from 2018/19 • Reviews of Scrutiny, Communications and Adult Social Care undertaken. <p>Actions proposed for 2020/21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Procurement Committee • Implement learning and outcomes from external reviews • Commission an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the Audit and Procurement Committee • Develop a governance assurance framework relating to third party interests