

# **Cambridge City Council - Code of Corporate Governance**

*Draft Code Subject to adoption by Council in September 2008*

A Council's Code of Corporate Governance is

**“ the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities”**

Guidance from CIPFA and SOLACE suggests each local authority should have a Code of Corporate Governance based on 6 principles:

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

The Council adopted a Code of Corporate Governance on 25 April 2002. It has been reviewed annually since then. The 2008 review has seen a substantial rewrite of the Code to meet the new CIPFA/Solace principles outlined above. The Council's Standards Committee and the Civic Affairs Committee have both considered the revised Code and the Civic Affairs Committee has recommended it to full Council for adoption. The Council will consider this in September 2008.

The Code takes each of the principles of good governance in turn and sets out the systems, processes and principles the Council has put in place to ensure good corporate governance.

The Code will be reviewed annually through the Annual Governance statement process, which will identify the actions to be taken to enhance the code or address any limitations with in it.

# **1 Focusing on the purpose of the authority; on outcomes for the community; creating and implementing a vision for the local area**

## **Supporting Evidence**

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| <p><b>1.1 The Council will have a clear vision for the City and set Medium Term Objectives (MTOs) to guide the Council's activities.</b></p> <p><b>It will review those objectives each year, through the Annual Statement agreed at the Annual Council meeting.</b></p> <p><b>It will work with partners to translate those objectives into a Sustainable Community Strategy for the City, which is agreed by those partners and used to influence their own service delivery.</b></p> | <p>Vision and MTOs</p> <p>Annual statement</p> <p>Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy</p> <p>Annual reviews of Strategy by LSP</p> |
| <p><b>1.2 The Council will agree with partners a Sustainable Community Strategy for the County, based on the five district Sustainable Community Strategies. It will set targets with partners and the government to deliver the objectives within the Strategy through the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement.</b></p>  | <p>Sustainable Community Strategy for Cambridgeshire</p> <p>Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement</p>                                     |
| <p><b>1.3 The Council will have a Medium Term Financial Strategy to resource the Council's aspirations and to assess and plan for any financial risks.</b></p>  | <p>Medium Term Strategy</p>   |
| <p><b>1.4 The Council will put service to the public first. The annual service planning process will be used to agree the priorities for each</b></p>   | <p>Service Plans</p> <p>Service Reviews</p>   |

**individual service area against the Council's MTOs, the service quality to be achieved in those services and the performance indicators to be used to measure progress towards the MTOs.**

**The service planning process will be aligned with the Council's budget setting and risk management processes.**

**Progress against service plans will be reviewed through the Council's performance management system. Scrutiny Committees will review the Service Plans each autumn. This process will be used to identify why services are not on target and what steps need to be taken to deal with this.**

Agendas for Scrutiny  
Committees January  
/February cycle

Annual performance reports

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| <p><b>1.5 A Corporate Improvement Plan will be developed to tackle areas that are not performing against target or where organisational development is needed, including setting up formal reviews of Council services where necessary.</b></p>   | <p>Corporate Improvement Plan</p>  |
| <p><b>1.6 Each year the Council will publish an annual report giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its performance and the satisfaction of service users in the previous year.</b></p>   | <p>BVPP<br/>Annual Report<br/>External accreditations e.g.<br/>Charter Marks</p>   |
| <p><b>1.7 The Council will seek to provide value for money to local people. It will work to maximise its resources by delivering services as efficiently as possible, working in partnership with others and using other providers where these are the best options. It will have a clear Procurement Strategy designed to meet the Council's wider objectives and Contract Procedures Rules designed to deliver robust and fair procurement processes.</b></p> | <p>MTS<br/>Audit Commission<br/>Performance Improvement<br/>Profile<br/>Annual Audit Letter<br/>Citizen Survey results<br/>Examples of external<br/>contracts and partnership<br/>arrangements<br/>Procurement Strategy<br/>Contract Procedure rules</p> |

## **2 Members and Officers working together to achieve common purposes with clearly defined functions and roles**

- 2.1 The Council will set out a clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of Executive Members, other Members and Council Officers in its Constitution.**
- Constitution  
Member/Officer Protocol

**The scheme of delegation within the Constitution will make clear what matters are reserved for collective decision-making by full Council.**

- 2.2 A Member/Officer protocol will be used to aid effective communication between Officers and Members and to clarify their respective roles and appropriate ways of working.**

- 2.3 The Council's Chief Executive will be its Head of Paid Service responsible and accountable to the authority for its operational management.**
- Constitution  
Job Description

**The Director of Finance will be the Council's S151 officer, responsible to the authority 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.**

**The Director of Customer and Democratic Services will be the Council's Monitoring Officer, responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.**

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| 2.4 | <b>The Council will ensure that these Statutory Officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.</b>   | Service Plans<br>Performance Reviews<br>Professional Qualifications and training  |
| 2.5 | <b>The Council's Civic Affairs Committee will responsible for constitutional issues and will ensure that the constitution is monitored and updated when required.</b>  | Terms of Reference of Civic Affairs Committee   |
| 2.6 | <b>The Council will use an Independent Remuneration Panel to give advice on payments for Members and consider their advice when setting the Members' Allowance Scheme.</b><br><br><b>The Panel will operate in an open and transparent manner, making their agendas, reports and minutes available to the public.</b><br><br><b>The Members' Allowance Scheme will also be made available to the public and on the Council's website and the scheme will be reviewed annually.</b> | Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference<br><br>Independent Remuneration Panel agendas, reports and minutes<br><br>Members' Allowance Scheme |

**2.7 When working in partnership the Council will ensure that Members are clear about their roles and responsibilities, both individually and collectively, in relation to the partnership and to the Council.** Partnership Terms of Reference

**It will also ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of each partnership and that all representatives in the partnership have clarity about their powers to bind their own organisation to partnership decisions.**

**3 Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour**

**3.1 The Council will expect the authority's leadership – both Members and Officers - to create a climate of openness, support and respect and to uphold the Council's values as expressed in the Council's Medium Term Objectives document.**

**The standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and staff will be set out in the Officer Code of Conduct, the Member Code of Conduct and in the Member/ Officer protocol. An up- to-date register of Member and Officer Senior Officer Interests will be maintained.**

**Supporting Evidence**

Value statements in section 3 of the MTO document  
Officer Code of Conduct  
Member Code of Conduct  
Member/Officer Protocol  
Register of Interests

## **Supporting Evidence**

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| <p><b>3.2 The Council will appoint a Standards Committee with a mixture of independent and councillor representatives to promote ethical standards in the organisation and to investigate potential breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.</b></p> <p><b>It will maintain a Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) policy to enable confidential reporting of suspected breaches of the code or unethical behaviour and will report on how the policy is used through the Annual Complaints Report.</b></p> <p><b>It will also maintain a Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy and both policies will be reviewed regularly by the Standards Committee.</b></p> | <p>Standards Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>Confidential Reporting policy</p> <p>Annual Complaints Report</p> <p>Prevention of Fraud and Corruption Policy</p> |
| <p><b>3.3 The behaviour expected of staff and managers will be set out in the Council's competency framework and will be used this as the basis for staff performance appraisal.</b></p>   | <p>Manager and Staff Competency Framework</p> <p>Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures</p>  |
| <p><b>3.4 The Council's standing orders and financial regulations will put in place processes designed to ensure that Members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.</b></p>  | <p>Constitution</p>   |

### **Supporting Evidence**

**3.5 The Council will ensure all partnerships with which it is engaged have a set of values or criteria against which decision-making and actions can be judged. It will work with those partnerships to ensure they are open and accountable and have clear governance structures in place.**

Partnership Terms of Reference

## **4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management.**

### **Supporting Evidence**

**4.1 The Council will operate within the legal framework for local Councils complying with its statutory duties and making the most of its powers to meet the needs of the City and its residents.**

Core Competencies for managers

Mangers' standard Job Descriptions

Role of Monitoring Officer

**4.2 The Council will hold its meetings, and those of its committees and working groups, in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality. The public will be allowed to ask questions at all Council and committee meetings.**

Committee Agendas

Constitution

## Supporting Evidence

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| 4.3 | <b>The Council will make sure members of the public have access to information about the workings of the Council. It will make clear what information is routinely published through its Freedom of Information Publication scheme and will respond promptly to requests for information.</b>  | Publication Scheme<br>Freedom of Information requests monitoring reports |
| 4.4 | <b>The Council will respect the personal data of its citizens, employees, suppliers and others the Council may communicate with in line with the principles of the Data Protection legislation and will make this clear in its own Data Protection Policy.</b>   | Data Protection Policy   |
| 4.5 | <b>The Council will record the deliberation of scrutiny committees and the reasons for Executive and Regulatory decisions and make agenda papers and minutes available on the Council's website</b>  | Agendas and Minutes of Committees<br>Council website                     |
| 4.6 | <b>Officers will use standard report templates for committee and executive reports to help ensure that readers are provided with information that is accurate, complete and unbiased. Reports will make clear the options available so that the implications of all decisions and strategic risks can be assessed before those decisions are made.</b> | Standard Committee report templates                                      |
| 4.7 | <b>The Council will actively consider the environmental impact of the Council's decisions before those decisions are made.</b>   | Environmental Assessment toolkit<br>Committee reports                    |

## **Supporting Evidence**

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| <p><b>4.8</b></p> <p><b>The Council will develop and maintain an effective Scrutiny process to encourage constructive challenge and enhance the Council's performance.</b></p> <p><b>It will also have clear protocols about Members' access to information and officer advice to enable them to perform their roles.</b></p>   | <p>Terms of Reference of Scrutiny Committees Protocol</p>                          |
| <p><b>4.9</b></p> <p><b>The Council will have a network of Area Committees to ensure neighbourhood issues are considered in the Council's decision-making processes.</b></p>  | <p>Area Committee terms of reference</p>   |
| <p><b>4.10</b></p> <p><b>The Council will have a Joint Development Control Committee with the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council for decisions affecting growth sites bordering the City and South Cambridgeshire.</b></p>  | <p>Terms of reference of Joint Development Control Committee</p>                   |
| <p><b>4.11</b></p> <p><b>The Council will have a clear and publicised complaints system, including the appointment of an independent complaints investigator, so that members of the public can express dissatisfaction with Council services and their concerns can be monitored and addressed.</b></p> <p><b>It will publish an Annual Complaints report analysing trends in complaints against the Council and what has been done to address them.</b></p> | <p>Complaints leaflet<br/>On Line complaints form<br/>Annual Complaints report</p> |

## **Supporting Evidence**

**4.12 The Council's Civic Affairs and Standards Committees will between them fulfil the core functions of an Audit Committee.**

Terms of Reference of both Committees

**4.13 The Council will maintain an independent Internal Audit function, with a risk-based annual audit plan, designed to test regularly that the Council's policies and processes operate in practice and that the Council complies with legislation and good practice.**

Annual Audit Plan  
Head of Internal Audit Opinion  
Annual Governance Statement

**The Head of Internal Audit will produce an annual opinion on the council's internal control environment to meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.**

**The Head of Internal Audit Opinion will be used to inform an Annual Governance Statement and this will be signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.**

## **Supporting Evidence**

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| <p><b>4.14</b>    <b>The Council will also agree an annual work plan with its External Auditors to test the Council’s response to major legislation and the soundness of its financial and governance processes.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations arising from internal and external audit and inspection processes will be used to inform future decision-making.</b></p>  | <p>Terms of Reference of Civic Affairs Committee</p> <p>Risk Register</p> <p>Annual Audit letter</p> |
| <p><b>4.15</b>    <b>The Council will ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs.</b></p> <p><b>It will have a Risk Management Strategy, supplemented by procedures and processes. An officer Risk Management Group chaired by the Chief Executive will oversee the monitoring of the strategy and the assessment of corporate and strategic risks.</b></p> | <p>Risk Management Strategy</p> <p>Agendas of Risk Management Group</p>                              |
| <p><b>4.16</b>    <b>The Council will undertake systematic risk assessments in all areas of Council activity, including those covered by Health and Safety legislation.</b></p> <p><b>It will maintain a corporate risk register detailing the council’s strategic and service risks and review this regularly.</b></p>  | <p>Risk Assessments</p> <p>Risk Database</p>   |
| <p><b>4.17</b>    <b>The Council will ensure that risk assessment is incorporated into the Council’s decision making and Members are advised of the Council’s risk profile at key stages.</b></p>  | <p>Minutes of Risk Management Group</p>  |

## **5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective**

### **Supporting Evidence**

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| <p><b>5.1 The Council will seek to maintain its Investors in Peoples accreditation.</b></p>  | <p>IIP Accreditation</p>  |
| <p><b>5.2 The Council’s People Strategy will set out how the Council will recruit, reward and develop its staff to reach their full potential. Staff joining the Council will be offered an induction programme and their training and development needs will be reviewed regularly through the Council’s annual performance review process, which applies to all staff.</b></p>   | <p>People Strategy<br/>Council Induction Programme<br/>Performance Review process</p> |
| <p><b>5.3 The Council will have up-to-date job descriptions and contracts of employment for all Officers. It will set and monitor clear objectives for Officers through the annual performance review process.</b></p> <p><b>It will agree appropriate remuneration for Officers through the single status collective agreement, which provides a framework for pay based on job evaluation and the national pay negotiations.</b></p> | <p>Job Descriptions<br/>Performance Review process<br/>Single Status Agreement</p>    |

## **Supporting Evidence**

- 5.4 The Council will offer all new Members an induction programme and the opportunity to develop a tailored personal development plan to meet their needs.**

Member Induction Programme

Member Training Programme

**The Council will also have an annual training programme for all elected Members. It will keep a register of the training received by Members and will review their training needs on a regular basis to ensure the programme develops to meet the different roles Members may fulfil at different times.**

- 5.5 The Council will encourage and facilitate Members to have appropriate training or briefing before performing certain roles (e.g. dealing with staff recruitment or disciplinary issues, being a member of the Planning or Licensing Committees).**

Member Training Programme

- 5.6 The Council will seek expertise from outside the authority when it does not have the necessary skills in house, making use of peer reviews and other mechanisms for ensuring challenge of Council services.**

**5.7 The Council will seek to encourage engagement in its work through a variety of means including public representatives on the Equalities Panel and Standards Committees and Tenant Representatives on the Housing Management Board.**

**It will also put resources into outreach work through its community development services and support to tenant and leaseholder representatives.**

### **Supporting Evidence**

Membership and Terms of Reference of these bodies  
Public Questions and petitions  
Community Development Service Plan  
Housing Service Plans

## **6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability**

**6.1 The Council will ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff.**

**It will promote the role of Councillors and make the public know who the Councillors are, what roles they have on the Council and how to contact them.**

**It will treat everyone fairly and strive to treat all as rational people able to make up their own minds.**

**It will also strive to provide services on the basis of need rather than ability to pay.**

### **Supporting Evidence**

Citizen Survey results  
Public Question Time and Petition procedures  
Council Website  
Know Your Councillors Leaflet  
MTOs  
Charging policies for services

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| <p><b>6.2 The Council will make clear through its website and other Council publications the services that it is responsible for, how people can contact the Council and the service standards they can expect.</b></p>  | <p>Council website<br/>Open Door<br/>Cambridge Matters</p>  |
| <p><b>6.3 The Council will undertake regular surveys of residents to ensure that it has up to date information about their priorities and levels of satisfaction with the Council and its services.</b></p>  | <p>Citizens Surveys</p>   |
| <p><b>6.4 The Council's consultation programme will be designed to ensure that the Council proactively seeks the views of a wide range of people and engages with all sections of the community effectively.</b><br/><b>The programme will include a mix of corporate consultation initiatives with more targeted consultation on service specific issues led by relevant departments.</b></p> | <p>Consultation reports<br/>Statement of Community Involvement<br/>Corporate Consultation Programme</p> |
| <p><b>6.5 The Council will seek to ensure all views are actively considered when making decisions, recognising that it is not always possible to reconcile conflicting viewpoints.</b><br/><b>The Council will ensure it gives feedback to consultees on the outcomes of consultation, what has changed as a result and explaining why it has made the decisions it has.</b></p>               | <p>Consultation pages on website<br/>Council Publications</p>   |

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| <p><b>6.6 The Council will undertake Equality Impact Assessments of all Council services on a rolling programme and take action to implement changes required, to ensure that council services and policies consider the diverse needs of its service users and citizens. It will have Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes and Action Plans, which will be reviewed annually and will use them to promote good community relations. It will also use "Mapping Poverty" research data to inform decisions about relative deprivation in the City.</b></p> | <p>Examples of Equality Impact Assessments<br/>Annual Review of Equalities<br/>Mapping Poverty report</p> |
| <p><b>6.7 The Council's Equalities Panel (which has staff, member and public representatives) will help the Council evaluate its success in promoting diversity and meeting a broad range of needs.</b></p>   | <p>Terms of Reference and agendas of meetings</p>   |
| <p><b>6.8 The Council will enter into compacts with Tenants and the Voluntary Sector agreeing ways of working with these two stakeholder groups. The Compacts will be reviewed on a regular basis.</b></p>  | <p>Compact documents</p>  |
| <p><b>6.9 The Council will set out in its Collective Agreement and Organisational Change Policy how it will consult with staff and Trade Unions.</b></p>  | <p>Collective Agreements<br/>Organisational Change Policy</p>   |
| <p><b>6.10 Members will meet regularly with the Trade Unions in a Joint Staff/ Employer Forum and each council department will also have departmental staff forums.</b></p>   | <p>Joints Staff /Employer Forum<br/>Terms of Reference and Agendas</p>                                    |