**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**MARCH 2021**

**South Ribble Borough Council**

**Local Code of Corporate Governance**

1. **Introduction**

 The "Local Code of Corporate Governance" (the Local Code) sets out and describes the Council's commitment to corporate governance and identifies the arrangements that have been developed and maintained to enable the transparent and fair delivery of the Council’s work. Each year the Council prepares an annual governance statement which tests the internal control environment against our Local Code. The Local Code is an important document which provides the framework for our compliance with good governance standards.

1. **Background**

 The framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" was first published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (CIPFA/SOLACE) late in 2007. This framework has been reviewed by CIPFA and Solace in 2015 and a revised framework published in spring 2016,. It details 7 core principles which should form the basis for each council’s Local Code. These will be considered below.

1. **What is Corporate Governance?**

 Each local authority operates through a governance framework. It is a system that sets out how we manage our obligations and behaviours and how we make decisions. For the purpose of this Local Code, South Ribble Borough Council has accepted the definition of Corporate Governance as stated within the CIPFA/SOLACE document entitled “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”, as

follows:-

***"Governance is about 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.***

***It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local authorities are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities".***

 South Ribble Borough Council recognises that effective local government relies upon establishing and maintaining the public's confidence in both the elected Members and officials, which then underpins the credibility and confidence in the services that we provide. Good governance should focus on outcomes for residents and service users.

 South Ribble Borough Council seeks to encourage the values of good governance to both our existing and potential partners through the promotion of these behaviours and by providing a clear and demonstrable lead.

1. **South Ribble Borough Council's Corporate Strategy**

The Council’s vision is:

**“A healthy and happy community, flourishing together in a safer and fairer borough that is led by a council recognised for being innovative, financially sustainable and accountable".**

The Council’s corporate priorities are:

* + **An exemplary council**
	+ **Thriving communities**
	+ **A fair local economy that works for everyone**
	+ **Good homes, green spaces and healthy places**

All the activities and work the council undertakes and delivers should be capable of being traced into the corporate priorities and the delivery or our vision. This ensures that residents can be clear as to why we are undertaking our works and making these decisions.

The priorities set the what and the corporate projects the how.

Also important for corporate governance, the corporate plan provides measures against which delivery can be assessed.

1. **Framework for the Local Code**

The following seven **core principles** are taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC 2014). Good governance means:

##### Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law

#####  Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

#####  Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

##### Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes

##### Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

##### Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

##### Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability

The diagram below, illustrates how the principles relate to each other.



In order to demonstrate a strong governance environment we have to demonstrate how we

comply with these principles. The following tables set out the councils approach and processes

which evidence compliance.

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| 1. **Good governance means behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.**

 **We will:****Behave with integrity Demonstrate strong commitment to ethical values;****Respect the rule of law;** |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  |  **Evidence** |
| ensure that the Council’s leadership sets a tone for the Council by creating a climate of openness, support and respect;  | Corporate Strategy ConstitutionStanding OrdersEthical Procurement / Contract Procedure Rules Code of Conduct for MembersStandards Complaints ProcedureDeclarations of Interests and register of interests for officers and membersProvision of ethical governance trainingStaff InductionOrganistional Development StrategyStaff Recruitment PolicyJob/Descriptions and SpecificationsContinuing Professional DevelopmentPerformance ManagementAnti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing PoliciesMinutes of meetings showing declarations of interestOpen Cabinet systemReport Templates requiring s151 and MO commentsScrutiny of ethical decision making Key Partnership Framework (being developed)Compliance with Statutory GuidanceCompliance with CIPFA’s Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local GovernmentSelf-Reporting to regulatory bodies |
| ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and officers, of work between them and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols;  |
| maintain arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the Council 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;  |
| maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and employees reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, officers, the community and partners;  |
| ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness;  |
| maintain an effective standards committee;  |
| use the Council’s shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Council; |
| in partnering arrangements 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.  |

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| 1. **Good governance means ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

**We will:****Be Open;****Engage comprehensively with institutional stakeholders**;**Engage stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users;** |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  | **Evidence** |
| ensure that the Council’s vision is delivered through the corporate plan and that it is clearly consulted, articulated and disseminated to all key stakeholders  | Annual ReportAnnual Governance StatementFreedom Of Information/Environmental Information Act publication schemeOnline Council Tax InformationAuthorities ValuesWebsiteCouncil Meeting MinutesPublication of Executive Member DecisionsPublication process for Key DecisionsPro-Forma Report templatesComments of SFO and MOCouncil meeting calendarUse of Consultation Feedback / as highlighted by CIPFA – has the approach to consultation changed during covid for both residents and employees (see last line above)Resident SurveyCommunications StrategyRecord of stakeholders with whom the council should engage and for what purpose Record of public consultationsEvidence based decision makingUse of social media |
| ensure that clear channels of communication are in place to enable the Council to engage with all sections of the community effectively and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure effective operation;  |
| consider all stakeholders to whom the Council is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required; These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands;  |
| hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality;  |
| maintain a clear policy that supports consultation and engagement with the public and service users including an appropriate feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result;  |
| publish an annual performance plan giving information on the Council’s vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users;  |
| Scrutiny Committee to have clear responsibilities including accountability for external and community aspects;  |
| produce regular reports on the activity of the scrutiny function;  |
| ensure that the Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its employees. That it is committed to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality where it is proper and appropriate to do so;  |
| maintain a clear policy on how employees and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.  |

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| 1. **Good governance means defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits**

**We Will:** **Define outcomes;****Provide sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**;  |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  | **Evidence** |
| promote and review the Council’s purpose and vision;  | Community engagement and involvementCorporate StrategyMonitoring Reports to CabinetProject ManagementPerformance Management FrameworkRisk Management and Grace SystemCapital Investment is structured to achieve appropriate life spans and adaptability for future use or that resources are spent on optimizing social economic and environmental wellbeingMedium Term Financial StrategyRecord of decision making and supporting materialsReporting / register of environmental data Statement of Accounts and EA value for money opinionCorporate Priority – Community Wealth BuildingEquality Impact AssessmentsKey Partnership Framework in development |
| review on a regular basis the Council’s governance arrangements;  |
| foster effective relationships and partnerships with the public, private, community and voluntary sectors;  |
| ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties;  |
| decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to regularly review service quality is available;  |
| put in place effective arrangements to enable continuous improvement; |
| decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the Council or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively;  |
| measure the impact of policies, plans and decisions on the community and its environment.  |

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| 1. **Good governance means determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

**We Will:** **Determine interventions;****Plan interventions**;**Optimise the achievement of intended outcomes;** |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  | **Evidence** |
| Ensure that there are on-going discussions between members and officers on the information needs of members to ensure considered and robust decision making | Members BriefingsStanding OrdersOptions AppraisalsMedium Term Financial StrategyCouncil calendar of meetingsCommunication StrategyKey Partnership Framework in developmentRisk Management FrameworkProject Management ToolkitPerformance Management FrameworkSenior Management Team Corporate StrategyCommunity Wealth building and social value - corporate priorityEthical procurement / contract procedure rules |
| Ensure members understand what information they may ask for and associated timescales;  |
| Ensure that our Scheme of Delegation is fit for purposes and is complied with  |
| Ensure that accurate and detailed records of all decisions are maintained together with supporting material |
| Ensure (wherever practicable) that decision makers are advised appropriately on all available options |
| Have a robust Financial strategy |
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| Have a robust Corporate Risk Register |
| Ensuring that the social value dimension is covered by any major procurement exercise that is carried out; ensuring that up to date and accurate advice is contained within our procurement guidance documents |
| Wherever appropriate develop and report on Key Performance Indicators for service areas and report against them |
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| 1. **Good governance means developing the council’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**

**We Will:****Develop the council’s capacity;** **Develop the capability of the council’s leadership and other individuals;** |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  | **Evidence** |
| provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis;  | Organisational Development PlanJob DescriptionsOfficer PDP’sAccess to update courses and information briefings on new legislationInduction – both officers and membersHR policiesStaff forumsClear statement of roles and responsibilities and how they will be put into practiceCE Performance Appraisal (member led)Arrangements for succession planning Member BriefingsMember PDPSScheme of delegation reviewed regularly in the light or legal and organizational changesStanding Orders reviewed on a regular basisEfficient systems and technology used for effective supportPeer reviewsCommunity Hubs |
| 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 Council;  |
| assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively;  |
| develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed;  |
| ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of Cabinet and other committees and their membership and agreeing action to address any training or development needs;  |
| ensure that effective arrangements are in place to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Council;  |
| ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development.  |
| **In order to achieve our aims we will detail within the Constitution:** |
| a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet and of each cabinet member individually and the authority’s approach towards putting this into practice; |
| a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of each committee, elected members generally and of senior officers; |
| a clear statement of the role of Scrutiny including overview of Council activity and responsibility for holding Cabinet to account. |
| a scheme of delegation and reserve powers including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision by full Council taking account of relevant legislation, and ensuring that it is monitored and updated when required; |
| a chief executive responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management; |
| a protocol to ensure that the leader and chief executive share a clear understanding of their roles and objectives;  |
| a senior officer (the 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;  |
| a senior officer (the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with;  |
| protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles; |
| **we will also:** |
| set out terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective member remuneration panel;  |
| ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery;  |
| 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; |
| **when working in partnership we will:**  |
| ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities (both individually and collectively) to the partnership and to the authority;  |
| ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership;  |
| 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. |

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| 1. **Good governance means managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

**We will:****Manage risk;** **Manage performance;****Have robust systems of internal control;****Manage data;****Provide strong public financial management;** |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  | **Evidence** |
| maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Council’s performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible;  | Performance Management Framework Publication of agendas and minutes of meetingsEvidence of improvements as a result of scrutiny Council Meeting CalendarBudget Monitoring Reports Member DevelopmentFinancial standards and guidanceFinancial Regulations and standing ordersEffective internal audit service is resourced and maintainedInternal & External Audit PlanInternal audit charterInternal & External Audit ReportsAnnual Governance StatementRisk Management Strategy and use of GRACEAnti Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Fraud Response planWhistleblowing policyAudit Committee complies with best practice / Governance Committee effectiveness reviewInformation Security frameworkDesignated Data Protection Officer and Senior Information Risk OfficerData Protection Policies and ProceduresData sharing agreementsData Sharing RegisterData Processing AgreementsData quality procedures and reportsData validation procedures |
| maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based;  |
| maintain arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice;  |
| develop and maintain an effective audit / governance committee which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions, and responsible for the Council’s governance and control matters; |
| ensure that a senior officer with responsibility for internal audit champions best practice and provides an objective opinion on all aspects of governance, risk management and internal control;  |
| ensure that the Council maintains an effective, transparent and accessible complaints process;  |
| ensure that those making decisions whether for the Council or a partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose; i.e. relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications;  |
| 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;  |
| ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Council, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs;  |
| ensure that effective arrangements for whistleblowing are in place to which officers and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access;  |
| observe all relevant legislative requirements and restrictions placed upon the Council, but strive to utilise the legislative powers to the full benefit of the community;  |
| comply with both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on the Council by public law;  |
| observe all the requirements of general law, and in particular integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into procedures and decision-making processes;  |

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| 1. **Good governance means implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability**

**We will:** **Implement good practice in transparency;****Implement good practices in reporting**;**Provide assurance and effective accountability;** |
| **In order to achieve this we will:**  | **Evidence** |
| maintain a user friendly and up to date Website | WebsiteAnnual Reportannual financial statementsAnnual Governance StatementCompliance with CIPFA’s Statement of the Role of the Head of Internal AuditCompliance with Public Sector Internal Audit StandardsRecommendations have informed positive improvement Community strategyCompliance with the Transparency CodeCorporate Governance Group |
| ensure that the Council’s vision is delivered through the corporate plan and that it is clearly consulted, articulated and disseminated to all key stakeholders  |
| maintain a clear policy that supports consultation and engagement with the public and service users including an appropriate feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result;  |
| ensure that the Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its employees. That it is committed to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality where it is proper and appropriate to do so; |
| wherever possible use plain English when writing reports |
| An annual report to council on performance, value for money and the use of resources – such report to be approved and owned by Senior Management Team and members |
| Provide Annual financial statements |
| Provide Annual Governance Statement |
| Demonstrate how positive improvements have followed on from any external audit recommendations |
| Compliance with CIPFA’s Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit |
| Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards |
| Have an effective and robust Community Strategy |

**SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

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**Principles, Statutory Obligations and Corporate Objectives**

**Local Vision Corporate Objectives Working Together Community Focus**

 **Statutory Obligations Ethical Values Developing Individuals Effective Decisions**

**Corporate Governance comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, by which local government are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and where appropriate, lead their communities.**

**Key Documents:**

**Annual Review**

Assurance Statements

Community Strategy

Constitution

Corporate Plan

External Audit Plan & Report Financial Strategy & Statement of Accounts

Governance Review, Statement

& Action Plan

Internal Audit Plan

Our People & Member

Development Plans

Pay Policy

Performance Framework

Performance Report

Risk Policies & Register

Service Plans

Shared Services Report

Treasury Strategy

**Key Documents:**

 **Ad-Hoc Review**

Anti-Fraud Strategies & Plans

Business Continuity Policy

Codes of Conduct

Communications Guidelines

Complaints

Contract & Procurement Rules

Equalities Guidance

Financial Regulations

Information Policies

Investigation

Health, Safety and Welfare

Planning Procedures

Information Security & Technology

Strategies

Insurance Guidelines

Record of Decisions

RIPA Policy

Safeguarding

Whistle Blowing Policy Strategic Risk Register

**Supporting Processes**

Complaints Process

Council & Cabinet Meetings

Decision Making Process

Employee Survey

External Audits & Inspections

Governance Group & Annual Review

Governance, Scrutiny & Standards Committees

Corporate Governance Services

Head of Paid Service/Section 151 Officer

Independent Remuneration Panel

Induction & Training

Monitoring Officer

Performance & Financial Monitoring

Performance Management Framework

Protocols & Job Descriptions

Regulatory Committees

Roles of Head of Finance and Internal Audit (CIPFA)

Senior Management Team

Shared Assurance & Financial Services

Shared Services Joint Committee

South Ribble Partnership