

Delivering Good Governance in Telford & Wrekin Council

Local Code 2017

Definition:

Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.

In order for the Members and Employees¹ of Telford & Wrekin to deliver good governance whilst working to achieve the Council's objectives they must **act in the public interest at all times.**

PUBLIC INTEREST PRINCIPLES - Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values (including the Council's values²), and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement (including with individual citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders)

Achieving good governance also requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for:

- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
- D. Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- E. Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaders and the individuals within it. This includes ensuring effective relationships and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Member and officers.
- F. Managing risks, performance and data through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

¹ Employees include partners, joint arrangements and volunteers.

² Fairness & Respect: Ownership: Openness & Honesty; Involvement

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and assurance (including audit) to deliver effective accountability.

The Governance Framework that supports this Code

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the authority's governance framework (which is underpinned by the Council's values) includes:

- Community Strategy - Shaping Our Future – Telford & Wrekin's Journey to 2020 - approved by Council on 2 May 2013;
- The Council's Medium Term Plan which outlines the Council's ambitions and priorities based on stakeholder feedback and these inform the service and financial planning process and personal targets;
- The Constitution (which includes the scheme of delegations, financial regulations and contract standing orders), Forward Plan and decision making processes;
- Co-operative Council principles and clear vision and values for the Council and the Community. "Being the Change: One Year On – Seeing the Change and Being the best we can" – identifies where changes have been made and outlines future changes;
- Clear governance arrangements to manage the Council's change programmes and restructuring occurring across the Council and key capital projects;
- Designated statutory officers – Head of Paid Service (Managing Director), Chief Financial Officer, Monitoring Officer, Director of Children's Services & Director of Adult Social Services (Director of Children's & Adults Services), Director of Public Health and Scrutiny Officer;
- The Council's Information Governance arrangements include a Caldicott Guardian and an Information Governance Framework sponsored by a designated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), data and information security and sharing policies and procedures. There is also a comprehensive training and awareness programme;
- The Performance management framework and data quality systems. These provide reports to SMT³, Cabinet and Scrutiny;
- A Legal Services team to ensure that the Council operates within existing legislation and is aware of and acts upon proposed changes to legislation;
- The democratic decision making and accountability processes contained within the Constitution;
- The Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards and their associated accountability with an independent Chair;
- SMT meets weekly with regular management meetings with Service Delivery Managers and Group Managers/Team Leaders;
- Policy Review – appropriate SMT members and Cabinet meet regularly to discuss emerging key strategic issues which could affect the Council in the future and formulate medium-term planning including the supporting financial planning strategy/options.
- The Standards Committee, Audit Committee, scrutiny function and other regulatory committees;
- The development of internal controls and checks within new systems and when existing systems are reviewed;

³ Senior Management Team – Managing Director, Directors and Assistant Directors.

- The Council's Human Resources function and workforce /organisational development procedures⁴ are supported by clear recruitment processes. These are followed up by on-line induction training (which includes information on the constitution, key policies, procedures, laws and regulations appropriate to the post and experience of the post holder) and on-going training and development;
- Member and Officer⁵ Codes of Conduct and the Officer/member protocol underpin the standards of behaviour expected by members and officers;
- A Member development programme to ensure members are properly equipped and have the capacity to fulfil their roles;
- The Council's communication, consultation and engagement strategies ensure that the local community knows what the Council is doing, receives feedback from them including the identification of their needs for incorporation into the Council's priorities;
- The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Cabinet are the lead members responsible for Corporate Governance including Risk Management. The key officer for Corporate Governance including risk management is the Managing Director. The service and financial planning process incorporates risk management and strategic risks are reviewed by SMT and agreed by the Cabinet;
- The Council's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016);
- Comprehensive budget strategy and management of the associated risks of reduced resources provides robust financial management and regular reporting to members;
- A process for the completion and approval of business cases for use of the Capacity fund, Invest to Save fund and use of consultants;
- The Council's Treasury Management Strategy and arrangements conform to CIPFA and External Audit guidance and is monitored by the Audit Committee;
- Internal audit operates to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and on a risk basis reviews the Council's systems and processes set out to achieve the Council's priorities in order to provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. The Audit & Governance Team Leader operates to meet the requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Internal Auditor in Public Sector (2010);
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Speak Up and Prosecution policies support the Council's governance processes and anti-fraud and corruption culture;
- The Council has processes and documents to support governance and reporting arrangements for partnerships;
- Projects are managed, as appropriate, within the principles of the PRINCE 2 methodology. This includes risk identification and management;
- Governance awareness and training for members within their member development programme and for officers through induction, Ollie and Staff news (updates/reminders on any revised governance arrangements, including information governance).

⁴ Further development work has continued on these to reflect Organisational Development, the Councils priority of Business Supporting, Business Winning Council and increased Commercial activities.

⁵ The Employee Code of Conduct which was re-issued in April 2013.