

# Local Code of Corporate Governance

Sets out the County Council's commitment to achieving good governance

## Key points

- Good governance is how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner
- The Council is committed to the principles of good governance, and has adopted the seven core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework
- The Council expects members and staff to uphold the highest standards of conduct and behaviour and to act with openness, integrity and accountability when carrying out their duties
- The Assistant Chief Executive will report annually on compliance with this Code and the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and this will be the basis for the production of the Annual Governance Statement

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This Code sets out for members and officers the main principles of good governance for East Sussex County Council. It is based on existing good practice within the Council and is consistent with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework for "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government".

## 2. What is good governance?

2.1 Good governance is how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

2.2 It comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values by which the Council is directed and controlled. Through effective governance the Council is accountable to, engages with and, where applicable, leads the community.

## 3. Purpose of the Code

3.1 This Code is the framework within which the Council is accountable to its users, stakeholders and the wider community. It sets out and describes the way in which the Council carries out its functions through its members and officers, and the procedures and processes through which it undertakes its work, and through which it aims to establish and maintain public confidence.

## 4. The Council's fundamental principles of good governance

4.1 The Council is committed to the principles of good governance, and has adopted the seven core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework as follows:

- 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 optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and individuals within it
- Managing the 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 key policies that underpin the Council's compliance with these principles are set out in Annex A.

4.2 The Council recognises that establishing, maintaining and reporting a culture of good governance is as important as putting in place a framework of policies and procedures.

The Council expects members and staff to uphold the highest standards of conduct and behaviour and to act with openness, integrity and accountability when carrying out their duties:

- **Openness** is required so that people can have confidence in our staff and our decision-making and management processes. We need to be as open as possible about the decisions we make and the reasons we have made them. Consulting openly and providing access to full, accurate and clear information helps us stand up to public scrutiny
- **Integrity** means straightforward dealing that is based upon honesty, selflessness and objectivity. The public expects us to manage public funds and the Council's affairs properly and appropriately, maintaining the highest standards in all our activities. We must act in the public interest not for personal gain. We will serve the whole community and remain committed to the promotion of equalities and diversity
- **Accountability** is the process of taking responsibility for our decisions and actions (including stewardship of public funds and all aspects of performance) and answering to external scrutiny.
- Positive **leadership** overarches all the principles outlined here because these can only exist where effective leadership is exercised. We all have a personal responsibility to promote and support these principles through our own actions

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and behaviour and those of any staff we may manage. The key aspects of positive leadership behaviour at the Council are effectively managing:

- people
- customer service
- performance
- money and other resources ,and
- personal development

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 All members and officers are expected to commit to the Council's principles of good governance; however, there are specific responsibilities for the following individuals and groups:

5.2 The following member bodies have specific responsibilities for good governance and these are set out in the Council's Constitution:

- Cabinet;
- Standards Committee;
- Governance Committee;
- Audit Committee;
- Scrutiny Committees.

5.3 The Corporate Management Team has a collective responsibility for good governance, but this is underpinned by the role of the three statutory officers of the Council:

Head of Paid Service	-	Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer	-	Assistant Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer	-	Chief Finance Officer

5.4 Chief Officers are responsible for the policies and procedures which form part of this Code and that fall within their functional responsibilities. Each Chief Officer is supported by senior managers who are responsible for ensuring that the relevant polices and procedures are up to date, are being complied with and are effective in achieving good governance.

5.5 The Assistant Chief Executive has responsibility for the direction and review of corporate governance within the Council and is supported by the Statutory Officer Group of senior managers.

## 6. Monitoring and review

6.1 The Assistant Chief Executive, as Monitoring Officer, will report annually on compliance with this Code and the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements. The report will also be the basis for the production of the Annual Governance Statement which will be published in the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement will be approved by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

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