

**CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION – SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE**

March 2017



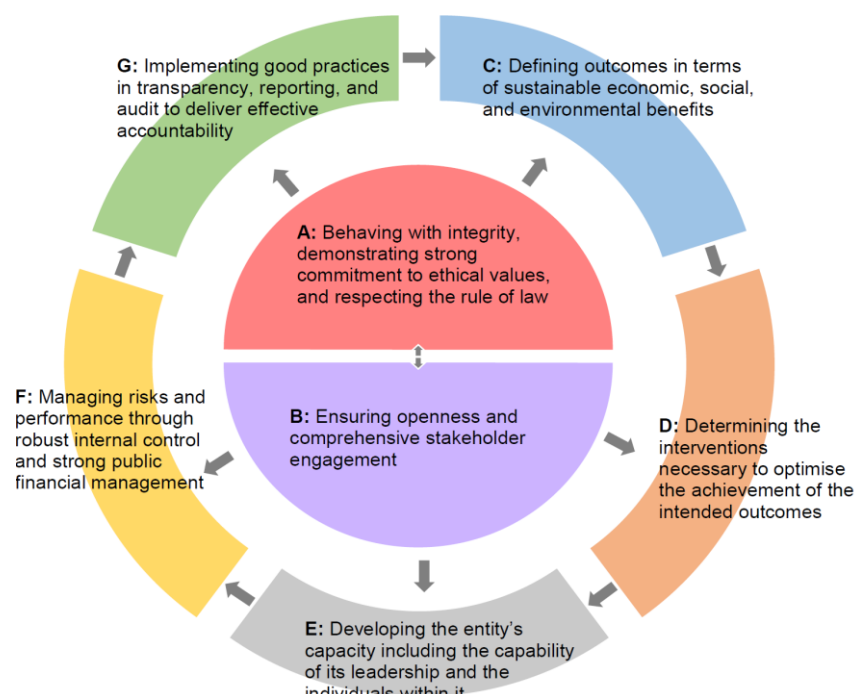
The Code of Corporate Governance comprises the principles under which we work and deliver services, listing the documents, processes and actions by which we ensure compliance with these principles.

The Regulations require a local authority to conduct a review, at least once a year, of the effectiveness of their systems of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement reporting on the review as part of its statement of accounts.

The code is based on a set of seven core principles set out in the CIPFA publication 'Delivering good governance in Local Government: Framework' and sets out in detail how we comply with each of these principles, as well as a series of sub-principles. The core principles are:

- Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Core Principle C: Defining outcome in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits
- Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- Core Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The figure below sets out the relationship between the principles:



This document provides a summary of City of Lincoln Council's Code of Corporate Governance which provides more detail.

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

The Council is responsible for using public resources to provide services for our citizens. We are accountable for how much we spend and for the way we use the resources with which we have been entrusted. In addition, we have an overarching mission to serve the public interest, by adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies.

Ethical values and standards are defined in the Council's Constitution and should form the basis for all our policies, procedures and actions as well as the behaviour of our Members and staff.

Council officers are often involved with interpreting laws and this demands a high standard of conduct to prevent the council being brought into disrepute. We should demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as compliance with all relevant laws.

It is therefore essential that we can demonstrate the integrity of all our actions and that we have mechanisms in place that encourage and enforce a strong commitment to ethical values and legal compliance at all levels.

1. The Council will maintain shared values including leadership values (openness, support and respect) both for the Council and its officers. These are defined in the constitution and reflect public expectations about the conduct and behaviour of individuals.
2. We use shared values as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Council. We demonstrate this by adhering to the constitution.
3. We have adopted formal codes of conduct setting out standards of personal behaviour for Members and officers.
4. We have an Audit Committee to raise awareness and take the lead in ensuring high standards of conduct are embedded within the Council's culture.
5. We have put in place arrangements to ensure that Members and staff of the Council are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest when engaging and making decisions with different stakeholders. Appropriate processes are in place to ensure that these arrangements are workable, including declaration of interests and anti-corruption policies.
6. We ensure that systems and processes for financial administration and control, together with protection of the Council's resources and assets, comply with ethical standards and are subject to monitoring of their effectiveness.
7. We will ensure availability of professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications and this is recorded in advance of decision making if appropriate.
8. Officers will actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them but at the same time work to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities.
9. Officers must observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon the Council as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular integrate the key principles of administrative law into procedures and decision making.
10. We have put in place effective systems to protect the rights of staff. We ensure that policies for whistle-blowing are in place and are accessible to staff and those contracting with the Council, as well as arrangements for the support of whistle-blowers.

11. We will publish an Annual Governance Statement, signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of Council to confirm that we are satisfied that we have effective governance arrangements in place.

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

The council operates for the public good, and we make sure partners, in the private, public and voluntary sector as well as individual citizens and service users are engaged in and have full access to information relating to decisions made. We therefore expect reports to decision makers to be open, provide all the necessary material to ensure informed decisions in the best interests of everyone in the city, and to have engaged stakeholders and service users in arriving at proposals under consideration. We must demonstrate that we act in the public interest at all times to maintain public trust and confidence. We should demonstrate clear reasoning for decision making and ensure that this is formally recorded for retrospective public scrutiny.

1. Vision 2020, which includes the council's vision, priorities, core values and strategic direction and action plan, has been through a robust development process, as well as consultation with key stakeholders, and is widely promoted. We will ensure that the Council'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.
2. We will maintain a culture of accountability so that Members and Officers understand to whom they are accountable and for what.
3. We will strive to engage with stakeholders on an individual and collective basis to demonstrate that we deliver services and outcomes that meet the needs and expectations of the public. These arrangements will recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish robust processes for dealing with these competing demands.
4. We will publish an annual report providing progress on Vision 2020, as well as financial statements, performance and the Annual Governance Statement.
5. We will deliver effective scrutiny of the Council's business as appropriate and produce an annual report on the activities of scrutiny function.
6. We will ensure that the Council as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and staff and we are committed to openness and transparency in all dealings. We will attempt to publish all committee agenda items under "part A" unless there is the need to preserve confidentiality where it is proper and appropriate to do so.

Core Principle C: Defining outcome in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Vision 2020 is a three year strategy and delivery plan, developed following wide consultation, and has an inclusive vision to deliver Lincoln's ambitious future. Progress towards achieving the vision, aligned with the key priorities, will be reported to and monitored by senior management and elected members. Service areas within directorates, and under the guidance of assistant directors, will be responsible for delivering individual projects to agreed timescales and budgets, with consideration for economic, social and environmental benefits which collectively will achieve our priorities.

In addition, the council produces a Medium Term Financial Plan which is a financial representation of the Council's Vision and supports the priorities and a People Strategy which demonstrates how we will develop the capability and capacity to deliver the priorities. These will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they continue to reflect the vision of the Council.

1. We have made a clear statement of the Council's purpose and vision and use it as a basis for corporate and service planning.
2. We will publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the Council's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.
3. We will ensure that those making decisions are provided with financial and non-financial information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.
4. We will identify and monitor service performance indicators which demonstrate how the quality of service for users is to be measured. This will include a phased introduction of an effective data collection system for all priority services.
5. We maintain a prudential financial framework, balance commitments with available resources; and monitor income and expenditure levels to ensure this balance is achieved.
6. We ensure compliance with the CIPFA codes regarding a Prudential Framework for Capital Finance and Treasury Management.

Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

The Council clearly defines its priorities and plans which are aimed at delivering the outcomes that the Council intends. These will focus on delivering effective and efficient services for the residents. We assess the risks of not achieving those outcomes and ensure that there are mitigating actions in place to support the achievement of intended outcomes. The Council's financial management arrangements ensure that there is adequate resource available to deliver those outcomes. The Council reviews progress against delivering those outcomes through its performance management arrangements.

1. We have made a clear statement of the Council's purpose and vision and use it as a basis for corporate and service planning.
2. We have risk management arrangements in place including mitigating actions to support the achievement of the Council's intended outcomes.
3. We have a local performance management framework in place which provides effective arrangements to monitor service delivery.
4. We will put in place effective arrangements to deal with a failure in service delivery and explore options for improving service delivery and outcomes for our residents.
5. We have prepared contingency arrangements including a disaster recovery plan, business continuity plan and arrangements for delivering services during adverse weather conditions.
6. We provide senior managers and Members with timely financial and performance information.
7. We ensure that budget calculations are robust and reserves are adequate.
8. The Lincoln Project Management Model provides a framework for effective management of all projects.

Core Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

The council has a programme of review, linked to its financial sustainability programme aiming to ensure continual improvement. It also benchmarks, both at strategic and service level to ensure services operate efficiently and effectively.

A newly developed People Strategy will ensure the workforce have the necessary skills and behaviours to deliver the vision for the city, and are effectively engaged to champion the council's priorities.

The Council will develop and retain a management structure that provides leadership and creates the opportunity for staff to work effectively and efficiently to achieve the Council objectives. We will provide training and support to enable staff to develop their skills so they can achieve their full potential.

1. Through the constitution we have set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council's Executive Committee and individual Members.
2. We have set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of all other committees and senior officers.
3. We have developed protocols to ensure effective communication between Council Members and officers in their respective roles.
4. We have developed protocols to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive negotiate their respective roles early in their relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.
5. We have set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of Members and officers and publish an Annual Pay policy statement in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
6. We have determined a scheme of delegated and reserved powers within the constitution and ensure that the scheme is monitored and updated when required.
7. We will ensure that effective management arrangements are in place at the top of the organisation.
8. The Chief Executive is responsible and accountable to the Council for all aspects of operational management.
9. The Chief Finance Officer is the Section 151 Officer and is responsible to the Council 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.
10. The Chief Finance Officer will lead the promotion and delivery of good financial management, safeguarding public money and ensuring appropriate, economic, efficient and effective use of funds, together with professional accountability for finance staff throughout the Council
11. The City Solicitor is the council's Monitoring Officer and responsible to the Council for ensuring that the constitution is adhered to.
12. We will assess the skills required by Members including the understanding of financial systems. We will agree a personal development plan to develop skills and address any training gaps, to enable roles to be carried out effectively.
13. We will assess the skills required by officers through the appraisal process and address any training gaps, to enable roles to be carried out effectively.

14. We will 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.
15. We will ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to effectively perform in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.

Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

The Council recognises the need to implement an effective performance management system that will allow us to deliver services effectively and efficiently. We understand that risk management, internal control and strong financial management are essential for us to achieve our objectives and we have put appropriate arrangements in place.

1. We will maintain an effective Audit Committee which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions.
2. We will enable the Chief Finance Officer to bring influence to bear on all material decisions and provide advice on the levels of reserves and balances to be retained.
3. We will 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 job. The council has a risk management strategy, directorate risk registers in place and all managers have received risk management training.
4. Internal control in the form of anti-fraud and whistle blowing policies as well as robust ICT security measures are in place. The council also has data management and data sharing policies and ensures compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code.
5. Performance is managed in accordance with the Local Performance Management Framework which has a 'golden thread' linking through from strategic to individual performance.
6. The council has an effective scrutiny function with three scrutiny committees (Performance, Community Leadership and Policy) and overarching co-ordinating group, in addition to a separate Audit Committee. Members scrutinise both internal decisions and external matters of concern in the community.
7. We will ensure our arrangements for financial and internal control and management of risk are formally addressed within the annual governance reports.
8. We will ensure effective internal control arrangements exist for sound financial management systems and processes.

Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

The Council recognises that effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed but ensuring stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the Council plans and carries out its activities in an open, transparent and proportionate manner.

1. We comply with the local government transparency code and publish all required information in a timely manner.
2. We have established a medium term business and financial planning process in order to deliver - a financial strategy ensuring sustainable finances, a robust annual budget process ensuring financial balance and an adequate monitoring process, all of which are subject to regular review.

3. We have put in place effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints.
4. We will maintain an effective, scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Council's performance overall.
5. We will maintain an effective Audit Committee which is independent of the Executive and Scrutiny committees.
6. We will ensure an effective internal audit function is resourced and maintained.
7. We will maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.
8. We will attempt to publish all committee agenda items under "part A" unless there is the need to preserve confidentiality where it is proper and appropriate to do so.
9. We will put in place arrangements for whistle-blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the Council have access.
10. We will produce clear, timely, complete and accurate information for budget holders and senior officers relating to the budgetary and financial performance of the Council.
11. We will maintain effective arrangements for determining the remuneration of senior staff and publish an Annual Pay Policy statement in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

Annual Review of Corporate Governance

At the end of each financial year, the Council formally reviews the governance arrangements in place and produces an Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement includes:

- Scope of responsibility
- The purpose of the governance statement
- The Council's governance framework
- Review of effectiveness
- Assurance statements
- Internal Audit's opinion of the system of internal controls
- Financial management
- Significant governance and internal control issues
- Action plan
- Certification statement

The Annual Governance Statement addresses any actions arising from the previous years' Annual Governance Statement and highlights any actions arising from the year under review.

The Annual Governance Statement also assesses the effectiveness and application of the Local Code of Governance and identifies any necessary changes and makes any relevant recommendations to the Council.

As part of the Audit Committee's governance role, the formal annual review will be undertaken by the Audit Committee on behalf of the Council.

The Annual Governance Statement is signed by the Leader of Council and the Chief Executive, and is published with the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.