



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

# LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE

JUNE 2015

# **St. Albans City and District Council**

## **Local Code of Governance – 2015-16**

### **1. What is Corporate Governance?**

- 1.1 The Corporate Governance framework comprises of the systems and processes, culture and values by which an organisation is directed and controlled. For local authorities this includes how a council relates to the community it serves.
- 1.2 Good Corporate Governance requires the Council to be open, transparent, effective, inclusive of all sectors of the community, accountable to the public it serves and to demonstrate integrity.
- 1.3 This Code is a public statement of the ways in which the Council will achieve good corporate governance.

### **2. What is the purpose of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and who should be complying with it?**

- 2.1 By publishing a Code of Corporate Governance, the Council is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring the high quality of its public services.
- 2.2 By promoting the principles of openness, accountability, integrity and effective governance, the Council encourages public trust.
- 2.3 The Code provides the public with greater awareness of the Council's arrangements and equips them with the knowledge to question the Council's plans and actions, thereby becoming more involved in local civic life.
- 2.4 The Code provides officers with an overview of the Council's governance arrangements and with the principles of good governance that each service and employee should be ensuring are in place.

### **3. The Principles of Corporate Governance**

The Code is based around six principles which were identified in the joint publication by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). Their published guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' identified the following as the essential criteria for the provision of good governance.

- a. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;

- b. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- c. Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- d. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- e. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective;
- f. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

**Principle 1 – Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.**

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
1	Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.	Develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision.	Corporate/Strategic/Service Plans Business planning Sustainable Community Strategy and Strategic Partnership Consultation Policy Framework Council website – "Vision & commitments, corporate plan, policies, strategies and budget" section Parish Conference
2		Review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements.	Corporate/Strategic/Service Plans Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme Sustainable Community Strategy and Strategic Partnership Local Code of Corporate Governance Annual Governance Statement Risk Registers Parish Conference
3		Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners.	Corporate/Strategic Plan Sustainable Community Strategy and Strategic Partnership Partnership Register Parish Conference

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
4		Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.	Statement of Accounts Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Council's website "Council Awards and Accreditations" and "Performance, spending and accounts" sections on the Council's website
5	Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning	Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available.	Performance Reporting to Chief Executive Board (Cab), Cabinet & Scrutiny Committees Audit Committee Customer Excellence award Consultation – "Your Views" section on website & Consultation guide Customer feedback and research Community Survey Internal and External Audit reports
6		Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery.	Performance Reporting to CExB, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees Audit Committee Complaints Procedure Deputy Chief Executive (Finance) Internal Audit reports Risk Registers
7	Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.	Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	Performance Reporting to CExB, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees Audit Committee Financial Procedure Rules Local Authority Carbon Management Nottingham Declaration Strategy & Action Plan Internal and External Audit reports

**Principle 2 – Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.**

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
8	Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.	Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive’s members individually and the authority’s approach towards putting this into practice.	Constitution (Committee terms of reference) Publication of Committee agenda/minutes Member/Officer Protocol Member Training and Development Senior officer training Council website – Council and Democracy Section CEX – Group Leader Meetings
9		Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers.	Constitution (Statutory Officer positions, Terms of Reference for Committees, Member roles) Protocols on planning, the representational role of Members, Chairmen, Officer/Members Schemes of Delegation Conditions of Employment Council website – “Council & Democracy”
10	Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard	Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, & ensure that it is monitored & updated when required. Make a chief executive or equivalent responsible & accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management.	Constitution Chief Executive (who is Head of Paid Service) job description Political Awareness Training Getting The Best Out Of Officers training

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
11		Develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.	Chief Executive Risk assessment for change of administration prior to each election Weekly meetings between Leader and CEX
12		Make 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.	Deputy Chief Executive (Finance) is the Council's S151 Officer. Constitution Job Description / Person Specification Report template includes financial implications
13		Make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.	Head of Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services is the Council's Monitoring Officer Report template requires that Legal Services are consulted before a report is considered by Members
14	Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.	Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.	Member / Officer Protocol Planning Procedures Code of Practice Outside Bodies advice given to Members Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Constitution (Statutory Officer positions, Terms of Reference for Committees, Member roles)

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
15		Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable).	Pay policy Statement (approved by Full Council) Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference and Reports Senior Management liaison meeting with Unison
16		Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery.	Performance Reporting to CExB, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees Audit Committee Complaints Procedure Heads of Service monitoring departmental projects and performance and reviewed in one to one meetings with Portfolio Holders
17		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.	Corporate Plan and business planning underpinned by a review of existing consultation work and customer feedback Medium Term Financial Strategy Performance reporting and performance indicators Council Website "Your Views"
18		When working in partnership, ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority.	Service Level and Partnership Agreements

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
19		<p>When working in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership</li> <li>- ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions</li> </ul>	<p>Constitution  Individual Partnership Agreements  Service Level Agreements  Advice given to Members in relation to outside bodies  Partnership Strategy  Partnership Register</p> <p>Individual Partnership Agreements  Service Level Agreements  Advice given to Members in relation to outside</p>

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

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
20	Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.	Ensure that the authority’s leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect.	<p>Constitution            Chief Executive’s and Leader’s staff briefings            Team Brief            Performance reporting            Audit Committee            Member and Officer Codes of Conduct            Member/Officer Register of Gifts and Hospitality            Members/officers Declaration of interests            Member/Officer Protocol            Whistleblowing Policy            Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy            Freedom of Information Policy and publication scheme            Monitoring Officer and S151            Implementation of Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Website and intranet            Portfolio Holders meetings with officers            “Corporate Governance” section on the Council’s website bringing all relevant information together under one heading</p>

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
21		Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member and Officer Codes of Conduct</li> <li>Performance System</li> <li>Disciplinary policy</li> <li>Appraisal and Performance Management</li> <li>Appraisal Policy</li> <li>Capability Policy</li> <li>Competency Framework</li> <li>Complaints procedures</li> <li>Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</li> <li>Member/Officer Protocols</li> <li>Member Development Programme</li> <li>Officer training on Member/officer relationship</li> <li>Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>IT Security Summary Policy</li> <li>Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>Elected Member Training &amp; Development</li> </ul>
22		Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member and Officer Codes of Conduct</li> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity training for Members and Officers</li> <li>Financial Procedure Rules,</li> <li>Contract Procedure Rules</li> <li>Ethical Governance policies</li> <li>Registers of Interests (Officers &amp; Members)</li> <li>Services and processes are underpinned by Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>Officer probation and induction process</li> <li>Corporate and Service Learning and Development Programmes</li> </ul>

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
23	Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.	Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners.	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Corporate/Strategic Plan Organisational values and OD Programme Administration's vision, objectives and priorities in place and shared Leadership of Place Shaping and Transformation Staff briefings/Team briefs Appraisal and Performance Management Competency Framework Customer Service Excellence
24		Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.	Contract Procedure Rules Ethical Governance Policies Member and Officer Codes of Conduct ICT Security Policy Charter Status for Elected Member Development
25		Develop and maintain an effective standards committee.	Agenda and Minutes Terms of Reference Regular meetings Work programme
26		Use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority.	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Corporate Plan - Administration's commitments and priorities in place and being shared Competencies Framework Appraisal and Performance Management Customer Service Excellence Portfolio Holder sessions with Senior Managers Policy Framework

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
27		In pursuing the vision of a partnership, 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.	Values agreed with each partner Partnership Register Partnership Strategy

**Principle 4 – Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.**

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
28	Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny	Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.	Two Scrutiny Committees and Task and Finish Groups Scrutiny is supported by robust evidence and data analysis Agenda and Minutes Work programme Successful outcome of reviews Training on developing meaningful work programme Training for scrutiny chairman Scrutiny of partners and joint projects
29		Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.	Constitution Decision making protocols Record of decisions and supporting materials Report template Decision list published
30		Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Member and Officer Registers of Interests Declaration of Interests at meetings Code of Conduct guidance and training provided to Members and Officers Planning procedures Code of Practice Governance Committee have responsibility for these issues Monitoring Officer reports on these issues Politically restricted posts Ethical Governance Policies

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
31		Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee.	Audit Committee Terms of Reference Audit awareness training Agenda and Minutes Part One Webcast
32		Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.	Complaints procedure on website
33	Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs	Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.	Council's Website Report templates dealing with key aspects Report by Head of Service with necessary technical expertise included Training and professional development Equality Impact Assessments
34		Ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately.	Report template requires consultation with Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer before report considered by Members. Record of decision making and supporting materials Equality Impact Assessments
35	Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.	Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs.	Risk Management Strategy Corporate and departmental risk registers Regularly review by Change Management Board & as part of business planning process Corporate and business planning Cabinet Member with accountability for risk.

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
36		Ensure that effective arrangements for whistle-blowing are in place to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access.	Whistleblowing Policy Dedicated Anti-Fraud Email Information for public on website Monitoring Officer Constitution Section 151 Officer
37	Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area	Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities.	Constitution Monitoring Officer Report templates Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives
38		Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law.	Availability of professional legal advice Monitoring Officer S151 Officer Report templates Constitution Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives
39		Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into their procedures and decision-making processes.	Monitoring Officer S151 Officer Procedure Rules Report template Constitution “Have Your Say” leaflet Planning Procedure Code of Practice Equality Impact Assessments Equality Objectives

## Principle 5 – Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
40	Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.	Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.	Member training and development Member and Officer Induction programmes Refresher courses Briefings Officer Development Plan (individual and corporate) Appraisals for officers Personal Development Plans Learning & Development Strategy/Annual Plan Charter Status for Elected Member Development being sought Organisational Development Plan
41		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 authority.	Appraisals Training Induction Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer Protocols Employee Policies Learning and Development Strategy/Annual Learning and Development Plan
42	Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group	Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively.	Appraisals for officers Personal Development Plans for officers Member training and development Learning and Development Plan Charter Status for Elected Member Development being sought

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
43		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.	Appraisals for officers Personal Development Plans for officers Member training and development Member scrutiny training People Strategy Charter Status for Elected Member Development being sought
44		Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs.	Performance reporting and performance indicators Performance management and appraisals for officers Investors in People Assessment Annual Internal and External Audit Reports Organisational Assessment
45	Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.	Ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority.	Equality Impact Assessments on services and policies Community Engagement Strategy "Your views" section on website Voluntary Sector Compact Local Strategic Partnership Customer insight work & Public meetings Equality Objectives Strategic Plan Consultation Local Development Framework consultation Neighbourhood Action Panels Communications (e.g. recycling changes promoted using a range of communication methods to encourage participation) Community Engagement Team projects Customer insight work

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
46		Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development.	Organisational Development Plan Internal Recruitment Process Internal Secondments Personal Development Plans Future Leaders Programme Learning and Development Plan Member development programme.

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

	Supporting Principles	The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:	Evidence of Compliance
47	Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.	Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what.	Constitution Sustainable Community Strategy Stakeholder identification Strategic Partnership - Targets and Performance Monitoring Website and intranet Consultation Guide Satisfaction surveys
48		Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required.	Stakeholder identification Statutory provisions Stakeholder surveys Consultation Guide Partnership Strategy & Register.
49		Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function.	Annual Report
50	Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning.	Ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively.	Website Members Information Bulletin Community News Equality Impact Assessments Safeguarding Policies
51		Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality.	Constitution Access to Information Rules Compliance with Localism Act access to information regulations Webcasting of Committee meetings.

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
52		Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.	Corporate Plan Website - "Your Views" section Consultation Guide Equality Objectives and Equality Impact Assessments Corporate business plan & Service plans Project management and business planning Cabinet committee reporting process
53		Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.	Statement of Community Involvement Customer Excellence Customer insight project team Partnership framework Communication Guide Consultation Guide Strategic Plan consultation
54		On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period.	Statement of Accounts Annual Governance Statement Corporate Plan Performance Reporting and Performance Indicators Council website - "Performance and Improvement", "Council Awards and Achievements" and "Council and Democracy" sections Committee agendas and minutes published on the website.

	<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>The Local Code should reflect the requirement of local authorities to:</b>	<b>Evidence of Compliance</b>
55		Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.	<p>Constitution  Customer pledge  Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme  Member and Officer Codes of Conduct  Ethical Governance Policies  Monitoring Officer Protocol  Data Protection Policy  ICT Security Policy  Council website</p>
56	Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.	Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.	<p>Investors in People  Facilities and Recognition Agreement with UNISON  Staff focus groups  Staff survey</p>