

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Hastings Borough Council is committed to the principles of good corporate governance and wishes to confirm its ongoing commitment and intentions through the development, adoption, and continued maintenance of a Local Code of Corporate Governance, as recommended by CIPFA/SOLACE in the publication entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2007)'.

Hastings Borough Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out and describes the Council's commitment to corporate governance, and identifies the arrangements that have been made, and will continue to be made, to ensure its ongoing effective implementation and application in all aspects of the Council's work.

What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate governance comprises the systems and values by which councils are directed and controlled and through which they are accountable to and engage with their communities.

To demonstrate compliance with the principles of good corporate governance, Hastings Borough Council must ensure that it does the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

“Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2007)”

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) have published a framework and guidance notes entitled, *“Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”* (the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework”). This provides guidance to local authorities on how to establish a locally adopted code of corporate governance.

Hastings Borough Council is committed to applying the six core principles of good governance set out in the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework of:

- § Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
- § Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
- § Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- § Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
- § Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.
- § Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

What is the purpose of this Code of Corporate Governance?

Good governance is crucial as it leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and ultimately good outcomes for citizens and service users. Further, good governance enables an authority to pursue its aims effectively whilst controlling and managing risk.

Hastings Borough Council has a robust Constitution and other good governance documents and arrangements in place. Together, these documents and arrangements demonstrate that the Council is seeking to ensure that it is governed well through the integration into its conduct of the core principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework.

A clear vision

The need for effective leadership is acknowledged as providing the keystone of corporate governance, and as such the principles can only be achieved if effective leadership is demonstrated through Hastings Borough Council providing a vision for its community.

The Council's agreed Corporate Vision is:

“The renaissance of Hastings through social, economic, cultural and environmental regeneration”.

(Corporate Plan 2014)

Underpinning our Vision are a number of Values and Strategic Aims which assist Hastings Borough Council in providing relevant, responsive local governance which addresses local needs in an effective and efficient manner. In doing so, the Council's approach will be open and transparent.

In the steps that it takes to achieve its vision, the Council welcomes diversity and the benefits realised through ensuring equal opportunities for all members of the community. It also recognises and will maximise the opportunities made accessible through innovative and flexible partnership working.

Standards of Conduct

The Council recognises that effective local government relies upon establishing and maintaining the public's confidence in both the elected Members and officers, and that it underpins credibility and confidence in the service that we provide. In addition, as a long established and committed 'enabling' authority, Hastings Borough Council recognises that the setting of high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead to both our existing and potential partners, and therefore provides the basis of effective community governance.

Therefore, the Council has adopted the National Code of Conduct for Members and Members are required to disclose their interests.

PRINCIPLE 1: Focusing on the purpose of the authority and the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.	
Supporting Principles	Evidence
1. Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Council's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan (Part I) • Local Development Scheme • @bout electronic magazine • Website
2. Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Sustainable Procurement Strategy • Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy • Service Reviews engaging stakeholders and customers
3. Ensuring that the Council makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Annual Budget • Priority Income & Efficiency Review (PIER) • Procurement Hub • Service Reviews • Benchmarking • Annual Audit Letter • Constitution (Part 9) - Financial Rules • Financial Operating Procedures • Treasury Management & Investment Strategy

PRINCIPLE 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.	
Supporting Principles	Evidence
1. Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Council and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution • Constitution (Part 2) – Overview & Scrutiny Terms of Reference • Constitution (Part 3) – Responsibility for functions • Constitution (Part 7) – Management Structure • Constitution (Part 5) – Protocol on Member/Employee Relations • Constitution (part 5) - Members' Code of Conduct
2. Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between Council Members and officers and that the responsibilities of Members and officers are carried out to a high standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (Part 5) - Protocol on Member/Employee Relations • Constitution (Part 5) - Members' Code of Conduct • Officers' Code of Conduct • Report of the Standards Committee (prepared on an as needed basis only)

<p>3. Ensuring relationships between the Council, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy • Ad-hoc Tourist Information Centre / Community Contact Centre Customer Satisfaction Surveys
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<p>PRINCIPLE 3: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.</p>	
Supporting Principles	Evidence
<p>1. Ensuring Council Members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (Part 5) - Members' Code of Conduct • Officers' Code of Conduct • Officers' Gifts & Hospitality Register • Members' Gifts & Hospitality Register • Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy • Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) Surveillance Policy • Report of the Standards Committee (prepared on an as needed basis only)
<p>2. Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (Part 3) – Responsibility for Functions • Corporate Plan

<p>PRINCIPLE 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.</p>	
Supporting Principles	Evidence
<p>1. Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution • Constitution (Part 2) – Overview & Scrutiny Terms of Reference per Articles of the Constitution • Publication Scheme– Freedom of information Act 2000 • Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) Surveillance Policy • Data Protection Policy • Corporate Compliments & Complaints Policy
<p>2. Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants or needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan (Part II) • Performance Framework • Service Reviews • Local Plan Survey
<p>3. Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Strategy • Risk Management Policy • Business Continuity Plan • Corporate Risk Register • Operational Risk Register • Annual Audit Letter

<p>4. Using the Council's legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in the Borough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (Part 2) Articles of the Constitution
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PRINCIPLE 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.	
Supporting Principles	Evidence
<p>1. Making sure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Development Group Feedback Report • Equalities Steering Group • Workforce Development Plan (including appraisals and training plans) • Management Training Courses • Investors in People (IiP) accreditation
<p>2. Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework • Member Development Group • Appraisals • Training & Development Plan
<p>3. Encouraging new talent for membership of the Council so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training & Development Plan (members and staff) • Job descriptions and appraisals for staff

PRINCIPLE 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.	
Supporting Principles	Evidence
<p>1. Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution (Part 2) – Articles of the Constitution - Overview & Scrutiny terms of reference • Corporate Plan (Part II) • Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme of reviews • Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) & LSP Executive Delivery Group • Town Hall Transparency – Council website e.g. supplier payments over £250, procurement transparency and grants paid to charities etc.
<p>2. 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 Council, in partnership or by commissioning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan • Consultation – residents e.g. Local Place Survey • Consultation – stakeholder groups • Local Strategic Partnership • Annual Budget • Medium Term Financial Strategy

3. Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.

- Performance Management Framework
- Workforce Development Plan
- liP work plans

Monitoring and Review

The Council will monitor the arrangements set out in this Code of Corporate Governance for their effectiveness in practice and will review them on a continuing basis to ensure that they are up to date.

Each year the Council will publish an Annual Governance Statement which will explain and assess how the Council has complied with this Code of Corporate Governance and provide details of how continual improvement in the system of internal control will be achieved.

The Council's Audit Committee generally considers all processes for risk, control and governance and provides independent, effective assurance about the adequacy of the Council's governance environment. The Council's Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of probity and conduct of Members and co-opted members.

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