



**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
CODE & FRAMEWORK**

Introduction

Corporate governance is a phrase used to describe how organisations direct and control what they do. For local authorities this also includes how a council relates to the communities that it serves.

Our Best Council Plan articulates two ambitions framed around our Best City and Best Council Vision: Best City being defined as, 'Leeds....A Strong Economy and a Compassionate City' with the aim of tackling poverty and inequalities, closely aligned with a range of associated partnership plans; and Best Council as 'Leeds City Council ... An Efficient and Enterprising Organisation'.

The purpose of our corporate governance arrangements are to devise and deliver services to the citizens of Leeds in a way that demonstrates accountability, transparency, effectiveness and value for money, integrity, and inclusivity.

Our Corporate Governance Code and Framework is based upon 7 Principles;

We will:

- 1. Behave lawfully, with integrity and in the public interest and demonstrate this through our conduct and behaviour.**
- 2. Be open and engage with local communities, service users and our other stakeholders.**
- 3. Focus our resources on outcomes and ensure council tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.**
- 4. Ensure we have clear responsibilities and arrangements for transparent and effective accountability.**
- 5. Take informed and transparent decisions.**
- 6. Ensure that we have robust and effective audit, scrutiny, information governance, risk and financial management controls.**
- 7. Develop our capacity and capability to be effective.**

It is the role of our Corporate Governance and Audit Committee to oversee and receive assurances relating to our governance arrangements and also to provide challenge on how our arrangements can be continually improved.

Councillor James Lewis
Deputy Leader and Executive Member with
Responsibility for Corporate Governance

Councillor Pauleen Grahame
Chair
Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

1) We will behave lawfully, with integrity and in the public interest, and will demonstrate this through our conduct and behaviour.

And commit to;

Embed values and codes of conduct for both employees and councillors.

Ensure that those who provide services on our behalf act in accordance with these principles.

Deal with breaches of legal and regulatory requirements and ensure fraud, corruption and allegations of misuse of public funds are dealt with effectively.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Values and behaviours
- Members' Code of Conduct
- Officer Code of Conduct
- Partnership agreements
- Procurement Terms and Conditions
- Arrangements for the registration and declaration of interests (including gifts and hospitality)
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Complaints and Compliments Procedures

2) We will be open and engage with local communities, service users and our other stakeholders

And commit to;

Ensuring that service users, local communities and other stakeholders have access to the council and are involved and consulted about major changes that may affect them.

Welcome peer challenges, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implement recommendations which arise from them.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Consultation
- Approach to restorative practice
- Community Committees
- Parish and Town Council Compact
- Leeds Citizens Panel
- Use of Scrutiny Inquiries
- Deputations to full Council and Community Committees
- Consideration of and response to Petitions

3) We will focus our resources on outcomes and ensure council tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.

And commit to;

Ensure that services put the needs of the public first, are non-discriminatory and are appropriate to different needs in the community.

Make best use of resources and ensure that the People of Leeds receive excellent value for money.

Consider and balance the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Vision for Leeds
- Best Council Plan
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Safer Leeds Strategy
- Youth Justice Plan
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Annual Performance Report
- Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan
- State of the City Events
- Performance Management Framework
- Annual Internal Audit Report
- External Audit Value for Money opinion

4) We will ensure we have clear responsibilities and arrangements for transparent and effective accountability

And commit to;

Document who is responsible for our functions and will ensure reports on our performance, delivery of value for money and stewardship of resources are routinely reported.

Review on a regular basis the vision for the city and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements.

Have in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery.

Ensure that relationships and accountabilities between the authority, its partners and the public are clear.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Constitution
- Executive Portfolios
- Monitoring of Revenue and Capital expenditure
- Delegation and sub delegation arrangements
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Protocol for the roles of Members and Officers in Decision Making
- Annual Internal Audit Report
- Customer service standards and dispute resolution arrangements
- Annual Accounts
- Access to Information Procedure Rules
- Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules
- Annual Governance Statement
- Annual Scrutiny Report
- Annual Standards Report
- Partnership arrangements
- Information Governance Arrangements
- Health Safety and Wellbeing
- Annual Pay Policy Statement

5) We will take informed and transparent decisions

And commit to;

Ensure that all decisions are taken which are proportionate, respect human rights and natural justice, are open and transparent with clear aims and desired outcomes and promote equality of opportunity.

Consider and balance the economic, social and environmental impacts of policies and plans.

Ensure that:

- those making decisions are provided with information that is relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications;
- appropriate legal, financial and other professional advice is considered as part of the decision-making process; and
- decision-makers can be held to account for the decisions they take through effective overview and scrutiny arrangements.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Executive Arrangements
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Executive and Decision Making Procedure
- Access to Information Procedures
- Delegation and sub delegation arrangements
- Procedures for decision making
- Provision of effective, timely, responsive and highly regarded legal, financial and professional services
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Use of data to support decision making and effectively target resources

6) We will ensure that we have robust and effective audit, scrutiny, information governance, risk and financial management arrangements.

And commit to;

Embed a risk management framework to achieve our priorities and protect the Council's reputation and assets.

Collect, use and store information and data appropriately.

Maintain a prudential financial framework which balances our commitments with available resources, monitors income and expenditure and ensures corrective action when necessary.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee arrangements
- Vision for Scrutiny
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy
- Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules
- Performance and risk management arrangements
- Compliance with the Code of Practice on Data Transparency and the General Data Protection Regulations
- Business Continuity arrangements
- A 'Public Sector Internal Audit Standard' compliant Internal Audit function

7) We will develop our capacity and capability to be effective

And commit to;

Improving the use of our people resource by developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan.

Continually review our performance, including how the organisation is led, how we work, and how we make the most efficient use of our resources assets (including data) to ensure our continuing effectiveness.

Ensuring that all councillors and employees have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform their roles effectively.

Supported and evidenced by our;

- Code of practice for Member-Officer relations.
- Our values and behaviours
- Appraisal arrangements
- Staff surveys
- Training and development programmes for Councillors
- Training and development programmes for staff (including the 'PAL Offer', investment in our current and future leaders through the Best Council Leadership Team, the Manager Challenge programme and Annual Leadership events)
- Participation in peer reviews.
- Recognition of colleagues through our awards for excellence
- Workforce development plan
- Graduate and apprenticeship programmes