

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code of Corporate Governance sets out the principles and commitments the Council has in place to ensure that its resources are used to achieve defined outcomes for the citizens and communities in the Leeds area.

2 ACHIEVING OUR AMBITIONS

- 2.1 These governance principles enable us to direct and control our activity to achieve our Best City Ambition: Tackling Poverty and Inequality. They bring together the systems, processes, and culture in place across the Council by which we plan and deliver services to the citizens of Leeds in way that shows how the council:

- Does the right things in the right way;
- Is open, and transparent about what it does and how and why it does it;
- Engages with citizens, partners, and stakeholders to plan and deliver outcomes; and
- Is held to account.

- 2.2 Our Code of Corporate Governance should be read and understood in conjunction with our values which shape our behaviours and underpin the way in which we work to achieve our ambitions.

3 CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 The Code is based on seven principles¹.

Behaving with integrity (Doing the right thing in the right way)		Ensuring openness and engagement (Sharing information and inviting participation)	
Defining outcomes (Having realistic priorities for what we can and should achieve)	Determining effective interventions (Considering the options and taking informed decisions)	Managing risk and performance (Ensuring that we can implement our plans)	
Developing capacity (Getting the best out of our resources and our people)		Effective accountability (Ensuring our processes are clear, robust, and open to review)	

¹ Derived from the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (CIPFA/Solace, 2016), which is a best practice framework for developing and maintaining a locally adopted code of governance

3.2 Each principle is supported by the commitments set out below:

Principle	Commitment
Behaving with integrity: We will behave with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	We are committed to ethical governance and will embed our values and use them as the basis for planning and implementing services, and have clear and enforced codes of conduct for Members and officers
	We will work with partners and providers to ensure that they share our ethical standards
	We will abide by the rule of law and will act in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework, dealing effectively with any breach
	We will have a zero-tolerance approach to corruption and misuse of power
Ensuring openness and engagement: We will ensure openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	We are committed to a culture of openness and will be transparent in our decision making
	We will use appropriate means to consult and engage with service users, local communities, and stakeholders to inform our activity
	We will develop formal and informal partnerships to ensure efficient use of resources and sustainable achievement of outcomes
Defining outcomes: We will define outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	We will maintain a clear strategic plan which sets out our priorities, and the intended outcomes for the citizens and communities of Leeds now and in the future.
	We will work to deliver our strategic plan in a way that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable and demonstrates excellent value for money
	We will ensure that our services are appropriate to the different needs of citizens and communities and that we deliver fair access to our services
Determining effective interventions: We will determine the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	We will ensure that decision makers are provided with relevant, timely information to support decisions which are proportionate, sustainable and realistic to meet identified aims and outcomes.
	We will ensure that our financial planning, and budgeting processes inform, reflect and support our decision making.
	We will consider best value in respect of all strategic objectives through the delivery of service specific outcomes.

Principle	Commitment
Managing risk and performance: We will manage risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	We will integrate robust and effective risk management arrangements into all our activity and decision making to identify, mitigate and manage risks to the achievement of our goals.
	We will have effective arrangements to plan and monitor our performance in line with our strategic objectives, and to identify and deal with any failure in service delivery.
	We will have robust arrangements for internal control which are defined and documented, clearly communicated, effectively embedded, meaningfully monitored and regularly reviewed.
Developing Capacity: We will develop the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	We will continually review how we use our assets and information to achieve outcomes efficiently and effectively.
	We will develop, maintain, and implement arrangements which support and develop the capacity of Members and Officers.
	We will ensure that leadership roles are clear and defined and that relationships between elected Members and officers work effectively to set and implement our strategic goals.
Effective accountability: We will implement good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.	We will provide clear, accessible, and timely information so that we can be held to account for the decisions we take and for our performance.
	We will have effective arrangements to provide independent assurance in respect of our governance arrangements
	We will welcome peer challenges, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies, and will implement action plans which arise from them

4 MONITORING CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

4.1 The Council obtains three levels of assurance as to the effectiveness of its arrangements:

Operational assurance	Officers with operational ownership and management responsibility provide assurance that arrangements are communicated and embedded
Specialist assurance	Officers with specialist responsibility for oversight and compliance provide assurance that arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, that compliance is monitored, and arrangements reviewed
Independent assurance	Independent assurance is provided by the Council's internal audit service, external auditors, and other external inspectors

4.2 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for oversight of these corporate governance arrangements and will receive annual reports setting out the Framework of Internal Control and mapping the assurance available prior to approval of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.