City of York Council Code of Corporate Governance

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Introduction - What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate governance is about the systems, processes, and values by which Councils operate and by which they engage with and are held accountable to their communities and stakeholders.

City of York Council is committed to demonstrating that it has the necessary corporate governance arrangements in place to perform effectively. Building on previous best practice the Council has developed and adopted a refreshed approach to developing a Local Code of Corporate Governance which follows the latest guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)" This code brings together in one document the various governance and accountability arrangements currently in place.

The guidance defines the seven core principles, each supported by sub- principles that should underpin the governance framework of a local authority.

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rules of law.
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

Benefits & Monitoring

The documents and arrangements set out in the framework within this code demonstrate that the Council continually seeks to ensure it remains well governed and that to deliver good governance the Council must seek to achieve its objectives whilst acting in the public interest at all times.

The **Governance, Risk & Assurance Group** is responsible for ensuring the Code is reviewed annually as part of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement. Any revisions to the code will be reported to the Audit & Governance Committee for approval as part of this process.

Principle A – Behaving with Integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Supporting Principles

- Behaving with Integrity
- Demonstrating Strong Commitment to Ethical Values
- Respecting the rule of Law

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Publish an Annual Governance Statement which reviews the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework.
- Maintain the established Governance, Risk & Assurance Group (GRAG) with responsibility for monitoring this framework and all governance matters.
- Maintain shared values which underpin an ethos of good governance– communicated in Organisational Values & Behavioural Standards.
- Comply with legislation and all relevant professional standards.
- Maintain formal codes of conduct defining standards of behaviour expected of both Members and Officers.
- Publicise Gifts and Hospitality Guidelines
- Maintain a policy framework to address the risks of fraud and corruption including a Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy, Fraud & Corruption prosecution policy & Whistleblowing policy.
- Maintain effective systems to protect the rights of staff, including whistleblowing policies accessible and regularly communicated.
- Maintain a register of interests and seek declarations to be made at the start of Council meetings.
- Maintain arrangements to investigate complaints against Members & Officers including alleged misconduct.
- Maintain a committee to deal effectively with Standards complaints.
- Deliver the Workforce Plan which sets the expectation of the values, skills and behaviours which we expect from staff working for CYC.
- Complete Integrated Impact Assessment to help officers meet the statutory equality and communities requirements and to embed economic, social and environmental sustainability into everything the council does.
- Publish a Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement.
- Have an Anti-Money Laundering policy and protocol.
- Have an agreed Social Value Policy and Construction Charter that ensures suppliers procure and commission services, works and supplies and to develop effective solutions that deliver quality, value-for-money goods and services and broader economic social and environmental outcomes.
- Recruit and select employees in line with the Council's policies and procedures.
- Ensure that partnerships are established with common aims with clear outputs & outcomes.

This is evidenced by:

- Annual Governance Statement
- Code of Conduct for Members
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Organisational Values & Behavioural Standards
- Webcasting of Council Meetings
- Council Meeting minutes
- Counter Fraud & Corruption Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Audit Charter – updated and taken to Audit & Governance Committee as required
- Audit & Governance Committee
- Register of Interests
- Register of Gifts & Hospitality
- Complaints & Customer Feedback policy
- Housing Ombudsman Self Assessment – City of York Council
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Financial Regulations
- Statement of Accounts
- External inspection of the Statement of Accounts
- Standards Committee
- All committee reports include detailed analysis of all implications and the required Equalities Impact Assessment
- The constitution which includes:
  - Financial Procedure Rules
  - Contract Procedure Rules
  - Codes of Conduct for Members
  - Codes of Conduct for Employees
  - Scheme of Delegation to officers
  - Appointments and dismissal of staff
- Responsible Procurement information on the Council website
- Partnerships guidance available on the intranet

Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Supporting Principles

- Openness
- Engaging comprehensively with Institutional stakeholders
- Engaging stakeholders effectively, including citizens and service users

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Seek the views of its stakeholders and respond appropriately.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for the public to engage effectively with the Council as set out in article 3 of the constitution including rights to information, participation and how to complain or comment.
- Ensure Council meetings are accessible.
- Publish Agendas, minutes, report packs and a calendar for a full year for Council meetings on Mod Gov and a formal notice of each meeting will be displayed at Council offices.
- Ensure compliance with requirements under the transparency code – published on the Councils website and Open Data platform.
- Set a balanced budget.
- Publish an Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Auditors report to inform stakeholders and service users of the previous year's achievements and outcomes
- Encourage and assist citizens to inspect the Statement of Accounts in accordance with regulations.
- Ensure public consultation on the annual budget.
- Continue to ensure weaknesses are addressed.
- Ensure structures are in place to encourage public participation.

This is evidenced by:

- [Resident Survey (Talk-About)](#)
- [Public attendance at Council meetings](#)
- [Webcasting of Council Meetings](#)
- [Constitution](#)
- [Mod.gov](#)
- [Open Data Platform](#)
- [Media Protocol](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)](#)
- [Statement of Accounts](#)
- [External inspection of the Statement of Accounts](#)
- [Budget Consultation](#)
- [Our publication scheme – City of York Council](#)
- [Freedom of Information Responses Disclosure Log – City of York Council](#)

Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

Supporting Principles

- Defining Outcomes
- Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Make a clear statement of the Council's purpose and vision and use it as a basis for all corporate & Service planning.
- Publish on the Council's website all annual reports to communicate the Council's activities and achievements including its financial position and performance.
- Prioritise resources to deal with competing demands and consider the impact of decisions in the medium-term financial strategy.
- Identify and manage risks to the achievement of outcomes.
- Have a clear, published Procurement Strategy.

This is evidenced by:

- [Council Plan](#)
- [City of York Council Budget and Spending](#)
- [Statement of Accounts](#)
- [External inspection of the Statement of Accounts](#)
- [Financial Strategy (MTFS)](#)
- [Risk Reports](#)
- [Procurement Strategy](#)

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

Supporting Principles

- Determining Interventions
- Planning Interventions
- Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Make a clear statement of the Council's purpose and aims and use this as a basis for corporate and service planning.
- Maintain a forward plan for reports and decisions to be made.
- Regularly report on key performance Indicators (KPIs)which have been established for each service element.
- Ensure budgets are prepared in accordance with organisational objectives and regularly reported upon.
- Provide senior managers and members with timely financial and performance information.

This is evidenced by:

- Council Plan
- Corporate Performance Framework
- Performance Scorecards published on Open Data platform
- Financial Strategy
- Regular finance and performance reporting to the Executive
- Executive Forward Plan

Principle E – Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Supporting Principles

- Developing the Council's capacity
- Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Council's Executive, Full Council, and individual Members through the Constitution.
- Maintain an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.
- Maintain officer and member induction programmes.
- Assess the skills required by officers through the performance process and address any training gaps to enable roles to be carried out effectively.
- Deliver member training.
- Regularly review the scheme of delegation and Constitution and update when required.
- Ensure arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce.

This is evidenced by:

- [Constitution](#)
- Performance Development Reviews
- [Effective Induction programme](#)
- Member/ Officer training
- [Residents survey (Talk-About)](#)
- [Public participation arrangements](#)
- Sickness Absence policy
- [Schemes of delegation for members and officers](#)

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

Supporting Principles

- Managing Risk
- Managing Performance
- Robust Internal Control
- Managing data
- Strong public financial management

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Maintain an effective Audit & Governance Committee independent of executive & Scrutiny functions.
- Maintain an effective Scrutiny function.
- Ensure robust and integrated risk management arrangements are in place and responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.
- Manage performance by ensuring the Corporate Performance Framework is adhered to.
- Ensure publication of Agendas and minutes are published.
- Maintain regular programme of training for the Audit & Governance Committee to enable effective performance.
- Maintain financial regulations to ensure consistency and clear financial protocols.
- Maintain a transparent complaints and feedback procedure.
- Internal Audit annual risk-based programme of internal audits informed by the council's risk register.
- Individual audits take account of service/ project risks, and each assurance report provides an opinion on how risks are being managed.
- Ensure effective counter fraud and anti- corruption arrangements are in place.
- Ensure effective information governance arrangements are in place to support compliance with existing and emerging legislation for data protection and privacy.
- Ensuring financial management and governance arrangements support decision making and provide sufficient information to support the delivery of the Councils objectives.
- Provide a safe working environment including a health & safety framework and system.

This is evidenced by:

- Audit & Governance Committee
- Regular risk reports to Scrutiny & Audit & Governance Committee
- Risk Management Policy & Strategy
- Standards committee
- Corporate Risk Register

- [Corporate Performance Framework](#)
- [Mod.gov](#)
- Terms of reference
- Regular Member training
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Complaints & Customer Feedback policy](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman Self Assessment – City of York Council](#)
- [Inclusion of corporate complaint annual report with the statutory annual reports for adult's social care and children's social care](#)
- [Audit Charter – updated and taken to Audit & Governance Committee as required](#)
- [Regular Internal Audit reports to Audit & Governance Committee](#) including
  - Head of Internal Audit report
  - Follow up reports
  - Regular reports on results of internal Audit work
- [Counter Fraud & Corruption Policy](#)
- [Annual Governance Statement](#)
- [Regular finance and performance reporting to the Executive](#)
- [Medium term financial strategy](#)
- Monthly budget monitoring reports
- Cost Control Panel
- [Our Data Protection Policy Statement – City of York Council](#)
- [Our Appropriate Policy Document – City of York Council](#)
- [Our Privacy Notice – City of York Council](#)
- [Information requests – City of York Council](#)
- [Our publication scheme – City of York Council](#)
- [Freedom of Information Responses Disclosure Log – City of York Council](#)
- [Health & Safety Policy](#)

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

Supporting Principles

- Implementing good practice in transparency
- Implementing good practices in reporting
- Assurance and effective accountability

To achieve this, City of York Council will:

- Maintain compliance with the local government transparency code and publish all required information in a timely manner.
- Maintain effective and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints.
- Maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge.
- Maintain an effective Audit Committee independent of the Executive & Scrutiny Committees.
- Publish all Committee reports on mod.gov unless there is a legitimate need to preserve confidentiality based on the statutory test.
- Maintain and regularly communicate whistleblowing policies.
- Ensuring performance information is prepared on a consistent and timely basis.
- Governance, Risk & Assurance Group meet regularly and monitor compliance with the Governance Framework including areas for improvement as part of the Annual Governance Statement process.
- Maintain an effective Internal Audit function which conforms to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit.
- Welcome Peer Reviews and inspection from regulatory bodies and implement recommendations.
- Produce regular finance and budget monitoring reports for members reporting on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources.
- Produce regular budget manager reports to ensure senior managers own the results.
- Produce regular reports for managers and Members on the Council's performance in responding to requests made under freedom of information and similar.

This is evidenced by:

- [Open Data Platform - Transparency](#)
- [Publication of Disclosure Log for FOI/EIR](#)
- [Regular information governance and complaints reports to Audit & Governance Committee, including performance and benchmarking](#)
- [Inclusion of corporate complaint annual report with the statutory annual reports for adult's social care and children's social care](#)

- [Complaints & Customer Feedback policy](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman Self Assessment – City of York Council](#)
- [Scrutiny Committees](#)
- [Audit & Governance Committee](#)
- [Mod.gov](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)
- [Corporate Performance Framework](#)
- [Annual Governance Statement](#)
- Audit Charter – updated and taken to Audit & Governance Committee as required
- [Regular internal audit reports to Audit & Governance Committee](#) including:
  - Head of Internal Audit Report
- Internal Audit External Assessment
- Internal audit quality assurance and [improvement programme](#)
  - Follow up reports
- Regular reports on results of internal Audit work
- Opportunity for Audit & Governance Committee members to meet both Internal & External Auditors privately
- [Peer Challenges](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#)
- [Regular Finance & Performance reports](#)
- Monthly budget monitoring reports