



# **Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council**

## **Local Code of Corporate Governance**

Approved by: Governance Committee 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011  
Refreshed: March 2013

# LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

## INTRODUCTION

Corporate governance is a term used to describe the way that organisations direct and control what they do. For local authorities, it includes the systems, policies and processes, as well as the cultures and values, that underpin a Council's arrangements for effective:

- leadership
- management
- performance
- delivery of positive customer outcomes
- community engagement
- stewardship of public money

## GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Solihull Council is committed to achieving good corporate governance and this Local Code describes how the Council intends to achieve this in an open and explicit way.

In developing this Code, the Council has considered best practice and guidance, particularly the CIPFA/SOLACE framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". However, the Code is purposefully written in a way that best reflects the Council's own structure, functions, size and the governance arrangements in existence.

The Code is based on the following six core principles:

### Creating and implementing a Vision:

Good corporate governance means focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

### Roles and responsibilities of members and officers:

Good corporate governance means members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

### Standards of conduct and behaviour:

Good corporate governance means promoting values for the Council and by upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

### Decision making, scrutiny and risk management:

Good governance means taking informed and transparent decisions that are effectively scrutinised and managing risk.

### Developing capacity and capability of members and officers:

Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.

### Engaging with local people and stakeholders:

Good governance means engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

**The following details how the Council meets these core principles and the systems, policies and procedures it has in place to support this.**

**Core Principle 1: Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.**

Rational: Local government bodies need to develop and articulate a clear vision of their purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users that are clearly communicated, both within the organisation and to external stakeholders.

Good Governance is about:	To demonstrate its commitment to good governance, Solihull Council has:
Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Council’s purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users	<p>a) Developed and promotes its purpose and vision of “One Borough: an equal chance for all” in the <a href="#">Sustainable Community Strategy for Solihull 2008-2018</a> The Strategy that sets out a 10-year vision for the Borough and describes how the Council, partner organisations, communities and citizens, will develop the Borough of Solihull as a great place to be. It is based on the needs, concerns and aspirations of local people, and sets out improvement priorities to tackle the most important issues facing the people of Solihull.</p> <p>b) Developed and promotes values that govern how the Council acts and delivers services (known as the <a href="#">Council brand</a> – Open, Honest, Approachable and Keeping its Promises).</p>
Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning.	<p>c) Set out the customer outcomes it intends to deliver in a <a href="#">Sustainable Community Strategy</a>, <a href="#">Council Plan</a> and local service delivery plans.</p> <p>d) Arrangements in place to publish an <a href="#">Annual Report</a> presenting an objective, understandable account of the Council’s activities and achievements, its financial position and performance during the previous year.</p>
Ensuring that the Council makes best use of resources and taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money.	<p>e) Developed and maintains proper financial management arrangements. This includes approving a balanced <a href="#">budget</a> before the start of each financial year and publishing an annual <a href="#">Accounting Statement</a> that details the Council’s financial position in both the previous and coming year.</p> <p>f) Arrangements in place to deliver high quality services that provide value for money by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ developing effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors through the <a href="#">Solihull Partnership</a>, the <a href="#">North Solihull Regeneration Partnership</a> the <a href="#">Solihull and Shirley Town Centre Partnership</a> and the <a href="#">Community Safety Partnership</a>.</li> <li>▪ developing, publicising and operating in accordance with <a href="#">The Compact Plus for Solihull</a> which embodies the commitment made between the public bodies of the Solihull Partnership and the third sector organisations in Solihull to further improve the way they work together;</li> <li>▪ responding positively to the findings and recommendations reported in the external auditor’s <a href="#">Annual Audit Inspection Letter</a> and putting in place arrangements for implementing any agreed actions;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ collecting and analysing <a href="#">information and intelligence about Solihull</a>, its neighbourhoods and its people to support the development of the Council's policies and service delivery and to ensure that resources are targeted where they are needed most;</li> <li>▪ encouraging citizens to be involved in Council decisions through <a href="#">consultation</a> exercises;</li> <li>▪ measuring and reporting publically on the <a href="#">Council's performance</a> both nationally and locally against agreed targets;</li> <li>▪ ensuring the Council's <a href="#">Procurement Strategy</a> is effective and securing external funding where available;</li> <li>▪ implementing appropriate performance frameworks, benchmarking and risk management arrangements;</li> <li>▪ having a corporate <a href="#">Complaints Process</a> to deal with failure in service delivery and feed back learning into service areas so they can improve future service delivery.</li> </ul> <p>g) A well developed <a href="#">Emergency Plan</a> that allows the Council to respond effectively during emergencies, business disruption or major catastrophes.</p> <p>h) Made a public commitment to the principles of <a href="#">sustainable development</a> and aims to raise awareness of issues relating to sustainability such as energy efficiency, recycling, transport and water and environmental conservation by providing related advice and information on its Internet pages.</p>
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## **Core Principle 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles**

Rational: A constructive working relationship between members and officers, with clear roles and responsibilities, is essential to the achievement of the Council's vision.

<b>Good Governance is about:</b>	<b>To demonstrate its commitment to good governance, Solihull Council has:</b>
Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Council and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.	<p>a) Developed an agreed <a href="#">Constitution</a> that sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ how the Council operates including defining the roles and responsibilities of the executive, members and officers</li> <li>▪ how decisions are made and the procedures which are to be followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people</li> <li>▪ how the Council manages its financial affairs including financial regulations and procurement rules</li> <li>▪ clearly documented protocols governing the working relationships between members and officers</li> </ul>

<p>Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Council and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function (cont)</p>	<p>b) Elected <a href="#">a Leader of the Council</a> and nominated a <a href="#">Cabinet</a> made up of Cabinet Members with defined executive responsibilities.</p> <p>c) Appointed <a href="#">Overview and Scrutiny Boards</a>, that are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ holding the Cabinet to account and ensuring Corporate priorities are met</li> <li>▪ policy review and development</li> <li>▪ external scrutiny of other local organisations</li> <li>▪ performance management and review</li> <li>▪ examining matters of particular concern either within the Council or within the community</li> <li>▪ identifying best practice and ensuring that it is shared throughout the organisation</li> </ul> <p>d) Appointed a Chief Executive to be responsible and accountable for all aspects of operational management (the Head of Paid Service).</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>e) Appointed nominated Senior Officers to be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs (the Section 151 Officer – known as the Director of Resources) and for ensuring the Council acts in accordance with the law (the Monitoring Officer – known as the Director of Corporate Governance).</p> <p>f) Established an effective Corporate Leadership Team including the Chief Executive and the Directors of Public Health, Places, Resources, Childrens' Services, Adult Social Services, Business Transformation and Governance.</p> <p>g) Developed a <a href="#">Member and Officer Relations Protocol</a> to ensure Members and officers work together constructively in a spirit of mutual trust and confidence to successfully achieve the Council's objectives.</p>
<p>Ensuring relationships between the Council, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.</p>	<p>h) Developed an agreed <a href="#">Code of Conduct for Members</a> and officers, to ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained.</p> <p>i) Put in place arrangements to ensure that when working in partnership, there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership, the services to be delivered and members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority. See for example the <a href="#">Solihull Partnership Governance Framework</a> and the <a href="#">North Solihull Partnership Vision</a>.</p>

### Core Principle 3: Promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

Rational: A hallmark of good governance is the development of shared values, which become part of the culture, underpinning policy and behaviour throughout the organisation.

Good Governance is about:	To demonstrate its commitment to good governance, Solihull Council has:
<p>Ensuring Council members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.</p>	<p>a) Developed and promotes a culture of behaviour based on shared values, high ethical principles and good conduct by having:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an effective Internal Audit function that reports regularly to an independent Audit Committee</li> <li>▪ a <a href="#">Code of Conduct for Councillors</a></li> <li>▪ a Code of Conduct for Officers</li> <li>▪ a Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure for dealing with any harassment and bullying complaints</li> <li>▪ a <a href="#">Whistle Blowing Policy</a></li> <li>▪ a <a href="#">Money Laundering</a> and a <a href="#">Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy</a></li> <li>▪ a <a href="#">Prevention of Bribery Policy</a></li> <li>▪ a <a href="#">Register of Interests</a> for Members</li> </ul> <p>b) Since the adoption of a new Code of Conduct for Councillors in July 2012, nominated the Governance Committee to be responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Parish and Town Councillors. Its role includes giving the Council advice on adopting a Local Code of Conduct, monitoring the effectiveness of the Code and training Members on the Code.</p> <p>c) Nominated the Council’s Monitoring Officer to be responsible for considering any complaint that a Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>d) Developed policies and strategies that ensure equal access to all Council services and provide people with equal opportunities in getting jobs and in career development. These policies and strategies are outlined in the Council’s <a href="#">Equality and Diversity Scheme</a> and the <a href="#">Equality and Diversity Policy</a>.</p>
<p>Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.</p>	

## Core Principle 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Rational: Members need the support of appropriate systems to help to ensure that decisions are well informed, implemented and that resources are used legally and efficiently. An effective risk management system identifies and assesses risks, decides on appropriate responses and then provides assurance that the chosen responses are effective.

<b>Good Governance is about:</b>	<b>To demonstrate its commitment to good governance, Solihull Council has:</b>
Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.	<p>a) Arrangements in place to ensure effective and transparent decision making by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ documenting <a href="#">decision making arrangements</a> to govern how decisions are made</li> <li>▪ making available proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications;</li> <li>▪ publishing a <a href="#">Forward Plan of Key Decisions</a></li> <li>▪ holding meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality</li> <li>▪ documenting and <a href="#">publishing agendas, minutes and decisions</a> on the Council's internet</li> <li>▪ providing for the public the opportunity to ask questions or make representations at full Council, Cabinet and Regulatory Committees</li> <li>▪ maintaining an effective <a href="#">scrutiny function</a> to provide constructive challenge and to determine whether decisions have followed the agreed process and are in accordance with the Council's policy framework and approved budget</li> <li>▪ having an effective <a href="#">Complaints Process</a> for dealing with complaints in an effective, transparent and accessible way</li> </ul>
Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.	
Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.	<p>b) Developed an effective Risk Management Policy to embed both strategic and operational risk management into the culture of the Council. This includes establishing a Corporate Risk Group that reports directly to the Audit Committee.</p>
Using legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in the area.	<p>c) Put in place whistle-blowing arrangements that are accessible to members, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the Council.</p>

**Core Principle 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective**

Rational: Authorities need people with the right skills to direct and control them effectively. In addition, governance is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of knowledge and experience.

<b>Good Governance is about:</b>	<b>To demonstrate its commitment to good governance, Solihull Council has:</b>
<p>Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.</p>	<p>a) Arrangements in place to ensure that those charged with the governance of the Council have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ operating robust <a href="#">recruitment</a> and selection processes</li> <li>▪ having induction programmes for new employees and Members to ensure they are properly trained and have access to all relevant information, advice and resources to enable them to carry out their roles effectively</li> <li>▪ supporting ongoing personal and professional development for both Members and officers including specific training on performance management, risk and financial management</li> <li>▪ maintaining the Investor in People Standard</li> <li>▪ ensuring that individual performance appraisals are completed annually to reflect an objective assessment of each employee's abilities, identify any training needs and measure individual performance targets.</li> </ul> <p>b) Arrangements in place for publishing an <a href="#">Annual Governance Statement</a> within the Annual Accounting Statement.</p>
<p>Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.</p>	
<p>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>	



**Core Principle 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability**

Rational: Elected members are democratically accountable to their local area and provide a clear leadership role in building sustainable communities. Local government bodies are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Good Governance is about:	To demonstrate its commitment to good governance, Solihull Council has:
<p>Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function that effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.</p>	<p>a) Arrangements in place to seek and respond to the views of stakeholders and the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">consulting</a> Solihull residents about Council Services and priorities;</li> <li>▪ developing effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors through the <a href="#">Solihull Partnership</a>, the <a href="#">North Solihull Regeneration Partnership</a> and the <a href="#">Solihull and Shirley Town Centre Partnership</a>;</li> <li>▪ supporting the <a href="#">Community Safety Partnership</a> and Solihull’s <a href="#">Faith Forum</a></li> <li>▪ having an External Consultation Policy and <a href="#">promoting consultation opportunities</a> for the community to have their say about the budget, proposed major changes in existing services or plans for developing or introducing new services;</li> <li>▪ having a <a href="#">Petition Scheme</a> so that the community can have their say about any issues that concern them;</li> <li>▪ publishing a <a href="#">Forward Plan of Key Decisions</a> and holding meetings in public wherever possible;</li> <li>▪ documenting <a href="#">and publishing agendas, minutes and decisions</a> as well as the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based;</li> <li>▪ providing for the public the opportunity to ask questions or make representations at full Council, Cabinet and Regulatory Committees.</li> </ul> <p>b) Developed an informative and user friendly <a href="#">Council Internet</a> to publish and share relevant information with the community.</p> <p>c) Taken an active role in developing the <a href="#">Solihull Partnership</a> to provide a framework for multi-agency working and allow local groups and organisations to work together in a co-ordinated way to achieve the aims of Solihull's <a href="#">Sustainable Community Strategy</a>.</p> <p>d) An effective Human Resources function that reports regularly to the Corporate Leadership Team and Members. This includes development and maintenance of a wide range of employee related policies and procedures. Relevant employees and Union representatives are consulted on employee related matters.</p>
<p>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>	
<p>Making the best use of human resources.</p>	

## **A-Z Links**

[Accounting Statement](#)  
[Annual Audit Inspection Letter](#)  
[Annual Governance Statement](#)  
[Annual Report](#)  
[Budget](#)  
[Cabinet](#)  
[Code of Conduct for Members](#)  
[Community Safety Partnership](#)  
[Complaints Process](#)  
[Constitution](#)  
[Consultation](#)  
[Council brand](#)  
[Council Internet](#)  
[Council Plan](#)  
[Decision making arrangements](#)  
[Emergency Plan](#)  
[Equality and Diversity Policy](#)  
[Faith Forum](#)  
[Forward Plan of Key Decisions](#)  
[Information and intelligence about Solihull](#)  
[Leader of the Council](#)  
[Meeting Dates, agendas and minutes](#)  
[Money Laundering](#)  
[North Solihull Regeneration Partnership](#)  
[Overview and Scrutiny Boards](#)  
[Petition Scheme](#)  
[Prevention of Bribery Policy](#)  
[Procurement Strategy](#)  
[Recruitment](#)  
[Register of Interests](#)  
[Scrutiny](#)  
[Solihull and Shirley Town Centre Partnership](#)  
[Solihull Partnership](#)  
[Solihull Partnership Governance Framework](#)  
[Standards Committee](#)  
[Sustainable Community Strategy](#)  
[Sustainable Development](#)  
[The Compact Plus for Solihull](#)  
[Whistle Blowing Policy](#)