



## LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The term Corporate Governance refers to system by which the Authority directs and controls its functions and relates to the community it serves. It is therefore the framework of the policies, systems, procedures, and structures that together, determine and control the way in which the Authority manages its business, determines its strategies and objectives and sets about delivering its services to meet those objectives for the greater good of the community of the City of York and North Yorkshire.
- 1.2 The basic principles of good corporate governance as set out in the Corporate Governance Policy require the Authority to carry out its functions in a way that is completely open and inclusive of all sectors of the community; demonstrates the utmost integrity in all its dealings and is fully accountable to the public it serves. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority fully supports these principles. This Code is a public statement of the commitment to these principles and sets out clearly the way in which the Authority will meet that commitment.
- 1.3 The methodology adopted by the Authority has been updated to comply with guidance published in the Good Governance Standard for Public Services which sets out six key principles to be adopted by the Authority and using advice on Delivering Good Governance in Local Government produced by CIPFA/SOLACE in 2007.
- 1.4 The main body of the Code is therefore structured around the six key principles of the Good Governance Standard designed to reflect the assurance gathering process for the Annual Governance Statement; each commitment covers a particular area of the Authority's responsibilities in terms of corporate governance. These areas are:
- focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on 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
  - examination 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
- 1.5 Outside of the six key principles there are other influences which the Authority believes are important for effective Corporate Governance:-
- a culture that demonstrates a „Zero Tolerance“ of Fraud and Corruption



- working with the requirements of key Inspectors to demonstrate continuous improvement in the Authority's procedures
- improving Information Governance

1.6 Under each area, the means by which the Authority will meet and demonstrate its commitment to good corporate governance in relation to that particular objective is exemplified in Section 2 below.

1.7 If you require further information about the Authority's corporate governance processes, please contact the Director of Finance and Service Development at Service Headquarters, Thurston Rd, Northallerton, DL6 2ND or by email at [ian.young@northyorkshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.young@northyorkshire.gov.uk)

## 2. THE SIX KEY PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 **Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the Community and Creating and Implementing a Vision for the Local Area**

In order to achieve this commitment, the Authority will develop and promote its purpose and vision by having procedures which inform and influence key plans and performance measures. These will be subject to regular review and update. Partnership working is seen as key to delivering this objective and it will be important that all the organisations involved are working on a consistent basis towards a common purpose.

To reassure the local area that the vision is being developed and delivered, reports will be produced setting out the activities, achievements, financial position and performance of the Authority. These reports will set out how the quality of service delivery is set out, measured and reviewed. If procedures prove to be less than satisfactory then effective mechanisms will be adopted to ensure failures in service delivery can be corrected.

In focusing on this key principle the Authority recognises it operates in an environment where it needs to demonstrate that it makes the best use of the resources it has been allocated.

### 2.2 **Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles**

Members and Officers are public servants and need to demonstrate to stakeholders that they conduct business in an appropriate manner. The Authority sets out statements about what is required of them. These statements will be supported by protocols so proper clarity is given to the respective roles.

Effective Corporate Governance policies and procedures assist the Authority to be more efficient. To assist this process the Authority will:



- develop and maintain Standing Orders, Financial and Contract Regulations
- have an appropriate scheme of delegation
- ensure separate officers at a senior level are given the appropriate section 151 and monitoring officer responsibilities
- with respect to its statutory responsibilities, discharge those responsibilities in accordance with legislation

One way that the Authority demonstrates it is effectively working together is by operating performance management arrangements which show it is improving and achieving value for money.

An effective Corporate Governance Policy is needed to support the Organisation's vision of what it wants to achieve. It is an integral part of the Authority's demonstration to stakeholders that its underlying policies and procedures are sound.

Partnership working with a number of third parties plays an increasing role in the manner in which services are delivered. These arrangements will need to demonstrate clear, appropriate and effective Corporate Governance Arrangements which do not conflict with the Corporate Vision of the Authority.

## 2.3 **Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour**

The leadership of the Authority at both Member and Officer level has a culture of openness, support and respect by adopting relevant Codes of Conduct which hold individuals to account for their behaviour. To ensure all these individuals are aware of the Authority's expectations, an effective system of communication is in place. The Codes of Conduct will be subject to regular review to ensure they remain up to date.

The Standards Committee promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by Members of the Authority and assists them in observance of the Authority's Code of Conduct whilst the Staff Code of Conduct and associated reporting arrangements cover officer conduct.

The Authority has in place a complaints procedure available to anyone who wishes to raise issues about the conduct and / behaviour of Members and officers.

## 2.4 **Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk**

The Authority promotes open government and has put in place within its Standing Orders, Financial and Contractual Regulations clear guidelines to both members and officers on decision making.



The Audit and Performance Review Committee ensures that key procedures such as Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Internal control are subject to Member level review.

Legal and financial implications are considered by the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 officer in advance of decisions being taken. These officers also ensure that their delegated staff members are involved in detailed projects which have a legal or financial impact.

To minimise the risks facing the Authority it has embedded risk management within the organisation. The Audit and Performance Review Committee monitors the progress made on this topic on a regular basis.

Whilst the Authority believes that it has robust Corporate Governance arrangements in place, the Authority has in place procedures for whistleblowing which allow members of the public, contractors' staff and directly employed staff to raise concerns in a confidential manner. Whistleblowing and its supporting policy is an integral part of the Authority's Anti Fraud Strategy. The effectiveness of the Whistleblowing Policy is subject to review.

## 2.5 **Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be Effective**

All new members and officers have a specific induction programme which is kept under regular review and tailored when required. For members the Authority has in place a Development Programme which provides regular updates on new issues. All staff are subject to an annual appraisal which allows both staff and their managers to identify staff development needs.

All posts within the Authority have job descriptions/ role profiles supported by person specifications which enable them to carry out their roles.

## 2.6 **Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public Accountability**

To ensure it engages with the relevant local people the Authority has established:-

- a communication and consultation strategy
- a corporate report which sets out the targets it will achieve and its performance in the previous year
- a series of reviews as part of its Integrated Risk Management Plan
- its role in Partnerships and the Local Area Agreement

## 2.7 **Produce an Annual Governance Statement**

The Authority will produce an Annual Governance Statement. This Statement will follow all best practice guidance and progress on monitoring action against



any issues identified in the Statement will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Team. This Statement will be reviewed by the external auditor.

## 2.8 **Reports to Members**

The Authority's Audit and Performance Review Committee will receive an annual report on the Annual Governance Statement as well as regular reports on corporate governance and risk management matters. Any recommendations for action arising from these reports will be reported to the Authority.

## 2.9 **Information Governance**

Information Governance means that the Data Quality of Information is important to the Authority. To discharge this responsibility the Authority will develop and maintain a Data Quality Policy as part of its Information Management Strategy supported by an audit regime to ensure officers comply with the requirements.

## 2.10 **Reducing Fraud**

In relation to fraud the Authority will adopt and maintain:-

- a strategic approach to reduce the risk of fraud
- a culture of zero tolerance to fraud
- an effective anti fraud and corruption Framework
- a strong and pragmatic systems of Internal Control
- effective partnership working arrangements.

## 3. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

3.1 If you have any concerns about the way in which the North Yorkshire Fire and rescue Authority, its Members, officers or agents conduct its business, or believe that elements of this Code are not being complied with please contact one of the following as appropriate. Subject to any legal requirements, your enquiry will be treated confidentially and a response made following investigation of the facts in each case.

3.2 Further details are available from the "Contact Us" section on the website [www.northyorksfire.gov.uk](http://www.northyorksfire.gov.uk) or by direct contact with the following officers.

(i) Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive  
Nigel Hutchinson  
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Service Headquarters  
Thurston Rd  
Northallerton  
North Yorkshire DL6 2ND  
Telephone: 01609 780150  
Email: [nigel.hutchinson@northyorksfire.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.hutchinson@northyorksfire.gov.uk)



# **NORTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

(ii) Director of Finance and Technical Services  
Ian Young  
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Service Headquarters  
Thurston Rd  
Northallerton  
North Yorkshire DL6 2ND  
Telephone: 01609 780150  
Email: [ian.young@northyorksfire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.young@northyorksfire.gov.uk)

(iii) Monitoring Officer  
Barry Khan  
Legal Services  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
Northallerton  
North Yorkshire DL7 8AL  
Telephone: 01609 532173  
Email: [barry.khan@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:barry.khan@northyorks.gov.uk)

3.3 Should you wish to register a complaint or raise an issue with the External Auditor, the details are:-

Cameron Waddell  
Engagement Lead  
[Cameron.waddell@mazars.co.uk](mailto:Cameron.waddell@mazars.co.uk)  
Telephone: 0191 3836300

**July 2014**