

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT	DOCUMENTS/PROCESSES IN PLACE TO SUPPORT COMPLIANCE:
<p><b>1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area</b></p> <p>1.1 Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users</p>	<p>There is a clear statement of the organisation's purpose, which is used as a basis for planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Strategy</li> <li>• The Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Local Area Agreements</li> <li>• Public Service Agreement 2</li> <li>• Service Plans</li> </ul>
<p>1.2 Ensuring that users receive a high quality service, whether directly or in partnership or by commissioning</p>	<p>The Council constantly reviews the decisions it takes, making sure that they further the organisations purpose and contribute to the intended outcomes for citizens and service users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview and Scrutiny Committees</li> </ul> <p>The Council measures the quality of service for users and makes sure that it has the information it needs to review service quality effectively and regularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best Value Performance Indicators</li> <li>• Service Plan Targets and PIs</li> <li>• Corporate Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Review through Performance Board</li> <li>• Monthly and quarterly reporting</li> </ul> <p>Processes are in place to hear the views of users and non-users from all backgrounds and communities about their needs, and the views of service users from all backgrounds about the suitability and quality of services.</p> <p>The information is used when making decisions about service planning and improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Equalities Strategy</li> </ul>

<p>1.3 Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money (VFM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific targeted consultation exercises</li> <li>• Comments &amp; Complaints Procedure</li> </ul> <p>The Council measures VFM and makes sure that the information it needs to review VFM effectively, including information about similar organisations for comparison, is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Resources Officer Working Group</li> <li>• Performance Board</li> <li>• Executive</li> <li>• Benchmarking</li> <li>• Kent Price Book</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Good governance means members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles</b></p> <p>2.1 Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function</p>	<p>The Council sets out clearly in the Constitution its approach to performing each of the functions of governance and has a process for holding the executive to account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny Committees</li> <li>• Call in arrangements</li> <li>• Standards Committee</li> </ul>
<p>2.2 Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of authority members and officers are carried out to a high standard</p> <p>2.3 Ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other</p>	<p>The Council is clear on its decision accountability process and sets out a clear statement of the respective roles of its Executive Members and members of the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision Making Process</li> <li>• The Constitution</li> </ul> <p>The role of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive are separate and laid out within the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Constitution</li> </ul> <p>The Council engages effectively with the public and service users to understand their views and used this information to inform decision making:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation Exercises</li> <li>• Swale Arbitrator</li> <li>• Complaints Procedure</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour</b></p> <p>3.1 ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective</p> <p>3.2 Individual Members of the Council behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance</p>	<p>The Council takes the lead in establishing and promoting values for the organisation and its staff. These values are over and above legal requirements (for example, anti-discrimination, equal opportunities and freedom of information legislation) and build on the Good Governance principles. They reflect public expectations about the conduct and behaviour of individuals and groups who control public services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution – Members’ Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Constitution – Officers code of Conduct</li> <li>• Equalities Policy – in progress</li> <li>• Freedom of Information – SBC policy to allow information to be accessible</li> <li>• Standards Committee</li> </ul> <p>Members live up to approved guides to ethical conduct and demonstrate through their behaviour that they are focusing on their responsibilities to the organisation and its stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution – Members’ Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Standards Committee</li> <li>• Member development and training</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Taking informed, transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk</b></p> <p>4.1 Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny</p>	<p>The Council has a formal statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated to the executive and those that are reserved for the full Council. It also sets out when scrutiny can call in decisions and the wider role of scrutiny in the decision making process:</p>

4.2 Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs

- Constitution
- Decision Making Process
- Overview and Scrutiny arrangements

The Council states clear objectives for making their decisions. In their public record of decisions and in explaining them to stakeholders, the Council is explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based, and, in due course, about the impact and consequences of decisions.

Information and professional advice on legal and financial matters is available and used:

- Decision Making Process
- Delegations Procedure
- Financial Regulations Procedure

4.3 Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in operation

The Council operates an effective system of risk management through the Performance Board. This includes:

- Identifying key strategic, operational and financial risks
- Assessing the possible effects that the identified risks could have on the organisation
- Assessing risks arising from partnership arrangements that could have an impact upon the organisation or its responsibilities to the community
- Agreeing on and implementing appropriate responses to the identified risks
- Putting in place a framework of assurance from different sources, to show that risk management processes, including responses, are working effectively
- Reporting publicly on the effectiveness of the risk management system including a plan to tackle any significant issues
- Making it clear that Executive carries ultimate responsibility for the risk management system
- Risk Management Strategy
- Risk registers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Statement of Internal Control</li> <li>• External and Internal Audit review of Risk Management</li> </ul>
4.4 using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area	The Council's reporting process ensures that all reports contain the legal implications of any decision
<p><b>5. Developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective</b></p> <p>5.1 Making sure that elected Members and officers have the skills, knowledge and experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles</p> <p>5.2 Developing the capability people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group</p>	<p>The Council is committed to developing the skills that it has decided its Members need, so that they can carry out their roles more effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Training Programme</li> <li>• Member Development Programme</li> <li>• Member Induction Programme</li> <li>• Officer/ Member development Working Group</li> </ul> <p>The Council is committed to developing the skills that are necessary for officers to have to deliver the council's priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Appraisals</li> <li>• Staff Training and Development programme</li> <li>• Ongoing review of competencies</li> </ul> <p>The Council has reviewed its Executive ways of working with Executive members having specific objectives aligned to the council's corporate priorities including those relating to the corporate priority of the Council wanting to be a high performing authority. Individual Members will be to account for their contribution to this priority through regular performance reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report</li> </ul> <p>The Council regularly reviews its performance, assesses its ways of working and achievements and agrees an action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Comprehensive Performance</li> </ul>

	<p>Assessment Action Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Board</li> <li>• Corporate Improvement Plan</li> </ul>
<p>5.3 Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal</p>	<p>Enhanced information is sent to all prospective candidates. After election a detailed induction programmes is undertaken for new members.</p> <p>Executive portfolios are reviewed annually to provide new opportunities whilst maintaining continuity.</p>
<p><b>6. Engaging stakeholders and making accountability real</b></p> <p>6.1 Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develop constructive accountability relationships</p>	<p>The Council has made it clear, to itself and to staff, to whom it is accountable and for what. It has assessed the extent to which each relationship serves its purpose, including whether any relationships need to be strengthened and whether any dominate to the detriment of serving the purpose of the organisation and being accountable to other stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Corporate Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Kent Commitment</li> <li>• Kent LAA2</li> </ul>
<p>6.2 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 authority in partnership or by commissioning</p>	<p>The Council as a whole seeks and welcomes feedback, and ensure that it responds quickly and responsibly to comment.</p> <p>Complaints are a vital and necessary part of feedback, and there is clear leadership on handling and resolving them, and ensuring the lessons learnt are used to improve the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Standards</li> <li>• The Swale Arbitrator</li> <li>• Complaints Procedure</li> </ul> <p>The Council has a clear policy on when and how it consults and involves staff and their representatives in decision making. It has a system in place to protect the rights of staff and has a Whistle Blowing policy.</p>
<p>6.3 Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to</p>	<p>The Council publishes its Corporate Plan, Budget and Medium term financial strategy</p>

responsibility to staff

and its Best Value Performance Plan which sets out the organisation's purpose, strategy, plans and financial statements, as well as information about the organisation's outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period:

- Corporate Plan
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Annual accounts

