

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1. Introduction

1.1 Governance is about how police authorities ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner. It comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and controlled, and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community.

1.2 This Code of Corporate Governance describes how Bedfordshire Police Authority discharges its responsibilities in this respect, and particularly its two overarching statutory responsibilities:

- To secure an efficient and effective local police service; and
- To hold to account the Chief Constable of the Force for the exercise of his/her functions and those of persons under his/her direction and control.

1.3 The Chief Constable has a statutory responsibility for the control, direction and delivery of operational policing services.

1.4 The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework "*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*" sets out six core principles on which effective governance should be built. These also reflect the objectives of the Authority, as set out in the Business Plan:-

- 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 scrutiny and managing risk;
- Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective; and
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

- 1.5 To achieve this, a framework has been formulated locally which ensures that these principles are fully integrated in the conduct of the Authority's business as well as establishing a means of demonstrating compliance.
- 1.6 The Authority have approved a business plan which provides the direction for the Authority's activities. It is also developing an improvement framework based upon the Association of Police Authority's self-assessment framework, to ensure that the Authority operates to the highest standards. Progress against the improvement plan will be regularly monitored by the Authority.
- 1.7 The Authority can also demonstrate that the systems and processes in place are:-
- Monitored for their effectiveness in practice;
 - Subject to annual review to ensure they remain up to date.

2. The Code of Corporate Governance

- 2.1 Accordingly, the Authority has developed a Code of Corporate Governance which incorporates the core good governance principles, develops these in a local context, and sets out the arrangements for reviewing their effectiveness.
- 2.2 The way in which each of the core principles of good governance is put into practice by the Authority is set out below:-
- 2.2.1 The Authority aims to focus on its purpose and on outcomes for the community to create and implement a vision for the local area.

To achieve this, the Authority will:-

- promote the joint mission, vision and values of the Authority and Force;
- continue to improve the process of strategic planning to make better use of information gathered for decision making;
- devise a strategy for working with the Force, stakeholders and the community to set the strategy and priorities for policing;
- ensure that the work the Authority and Force undertake in partnership with others is underpinned by a common vision of their work and is understood by all parties;

- improve and monitor how the quality of service for users is to be measured and ensure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available;
- maintain the processes in place to ensure that the Force performs to a high standard and to identify and deal with failure if it occurs;
- communicate the Authority's activities and achievements, financial position and performance;
- ensure that the information needed to review performance in achieving value for money effectively and regularly is available.

2.2.2 The Authority aims to ensure Members and Officers work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

To achieve this, the Authority will:-

- ensure there is a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Authority, its members and officers and regularly review the effectiveness of these roles and responsibilities;
- maintain and keep under review a Scheme setting out the matters reserved to the full Authority and those matters which are delegated to the different Committees and Sub -Committees of the Authority;
- ensure that delegations and terms of reference of committees and the matters reserved for decision by the full Authority are clearly set out;
- maintain and routinely review a scheme of delegation setting out the areas of delegation to members of the Authority and the Chief Constable and officers of the force.

2.2.3 The Authority aims to promote its values and demonstrate the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

To achieve this, the Authority will:-

- ensure that Members and Officers of the Authority carry out their respective roles in a climate of openness, support and respect;
- ensure that standards of conduct and professional behaviour expected between Members, Authority staff and staff and officers of the Force are defined and communicated through appropriate codes of conduct and protocols;
- ensure that equality issues are incorporated into planning, consultation and service delivery processes; and
- put in place arrangements to ensure that the Authority and Force's systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.

2.2.4 The Authority aims to take informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management arrangements.

To achieve this, the Authority will:-

- maintain effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations;
- continue to develop and maintain effective arrangements to challenge and scrutinise the Force's performance and compliance with other requirements;
- ensure that Members receive timely information which is necessary to take balanced and informed decisions;
- ensure that risk management is embedded both within the Authority and Force and is used effectively to inform and focus its decision making, scrutiny and monitoring work; and
- ensure that both the Authority and Force have effective, transparent and accessible arrangements in place for dealing with complaints.

- ensure that the Authority has an effective Audit and Business Assurance Committee.

2.2.5 The Authority aims to develop the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective in their roles.

To achieve this, the Authority will:-

- provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs as well as opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on an ongoing basis;
- regularly assess performance as well as the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively; and
- ensure there are effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Authority.
- ensure that the composition of the Authority is representative of the communities it serves.

2.2.6 The Authority aims to engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

To achieve this, the Authority will:-

- ensure arrangements are in place to enable the Authority to engage effectively with partners, stakeholders and all sections of the community, recognising that different sections of the community have different priorities;
- ensure that processes for taking decisions about matters where there are competing demands from different sections of the community openly recognise and address those differences, and that these decisions are conducted in formal public meetings;
- ensure that stakeholders and the Force are aware of whom and what the Authority are accountable for and to whom.

3. Arrangements for the Review of Governance

- 3.1 The Authority has put in place the following arrangements to review the effectiveness of the Code of Corporate Governance.

Police Authority

- 3.2 The Police Authority is responsible for approving the local Code of Corporate Governance and for carrying out an annual review of its effectiveness. The Authority will receive and approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) at the same meeting at which it approves the Annual Statement of Accounts. The AGS, which will include an action plan to rectify any significant areas of weakness in corporate governance, will be signed jointly by the Chairman of the Authority; the Chief Executive; and the Chief Constable.
- 3.3 Effective consultation and engagement is essential in enabling the Authority to perform its role of holding the Chief Constable to account on behalf of local people. The Authority is planning to enhance its community engagement activity and consultation activity in the communities of Bedfordshire and with its partners.

Force

- 3.4 The Chief Constable is responsible for corporate governance issues affecting the Force, ensuring that appropriate reviews are carried out into key areas including:-
- Optimisation of operational delivery, with adequate service, governance and financial controls
 - Professional standards and performance
 - Management of information, including security and data protection
 - Strategic co-ordination of service and financial planning, including risk management
 - The processes for evaluation, and achievement of value for money

Standards Committee

- 3.4 This Committee's terms of reference include the following key requirements in respect of Corporate Governance:
- To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the Authority;
 - To assist Members of the Authority to observe the Code of Conduct;
 - To monitor the operation of the Authority's Code of Conduct.

Audit and Business Assurance Committee

This Committee's terms of reference include the following key requirements in respect of Corporate Governance:

- to monitor and make recommendations as to the adequacy of all plans, processes and practices required to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, guidance, standards and codes, whether external or internal and maintenance of best practice on Corporate Governance;
- to ensure arrangements are in place for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption;
- to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal controls systems and structures including management, financial and operational; and
- to oversee the Authority's Risk Management Policy.

Internal Audit

- 3.5 The primary role of internal audit is to give assurance to the Authority, through the Audit and Business Assurance Committee, on the effectiveness of the controls in place to managing risks. The review of governance and risk management feature in the annual audit plan.

External Audit

- 3.6 The external auditors audit the Authority's financial statements, Use of Resources, Annual Governance Statement as well as thematic reviews, as required. The external audit plans and reports, including the annual audit letter, are considered by the Audit and Business Assurance Committee.

HMIC

- 3.7 The role of the HMIC is to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of policing through inspection to ensure agreed standards are achieved and maintained, good practice is disseminated and performance is improved. HMIC reports are sent to the Chief Constable and Authority for consideration and appropriate action.

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Bedfordshire Police Authority