## **Thanet District Council**

# Local Code of Corporate Governance

Version 8 December 2013



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Thanet District Council would like to acknowledge CIPFA / SOLACE in providing the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' framework and guidance documents

## 1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

Supporting Principle: exercise strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose, vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users. The council is required to: We will do this through the following: Annual performance report develop and promote the authority's Corporate Plan purpose and vision East Kent Chief Executives Individual service collaboration agreements and supporting SLA's for all East Kent review on a regular basis the authority's **Shared Services** vision for the local area and its implications Managers Forum for the authority's governance arrangements Local Code of Corporate Governance Medium Term Financial Plan Partnership Framework ensure that partnerships are underpinned by Service plans a common vision of their work that is State of the District report understood and agreed by all partners Statement of Accounts Thanet Community Safety Plan Core values and behaviours publish annual accounts on a timely basis to Thanet Vision 2030 communicate the authority's activities and 'Your Services - Your Council Tax' achievements, its financial position and publication performance Supporting principle: ensure that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning The council is required to: We will do this through the following: decide how the quality of service for users is Annual performance report to be measured and make sure that the Appraisal process Corporate Performance Review Working information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available **Party** Customer feedback system Monthly performance monitoring Performance Board put in place effective arrangements to Performance Management Framework identify and deal with failure in service Senior Management Team delivery Service plans **Supporting principle:** ensure that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money The council is required to: We will do this through the following: Annual Audit Letter (External Audit) decide how value for money is to be **Audit reports** measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to **Business Transformation programme** Capital Investment Strategy review value for money and performance Corporate Performance Review Working Partv ensure that timely, accurate and impartial Corporate report consultation process financial advice and information is provided External Funding Protocol Capital bids and to assist in decision making and to ensure programme that the authority meets its policy and **Financial Procedure Rules** service objectives and provides effective Medium Term Financial Plan stewardship of public money and value for Performance Board money in its use

- ensure that the authority maintains a prudential financial framework; keeps its commitments in balance with available resources; monitors income and expenditure levels to ensure that this balance is maintained and takes corrective action when necessary
- ensure compliance with CIPFA's Code on a Prudential Framework for Local Authority Capital Finance and CIPFA's Treasury Management Code
- Performance reporting
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Value for Money audits

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

**Supporting principle:** ensure the effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about Executive and Non-Executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the Scrutiny function

#### The council is required to:

- set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Executive and of the Executive's Members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice
- set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally, senior officers and of the leadership team and its members individually
- ensure that the CFO reports directly to the chief executive and is a member of the leadership team with a status at least equivalent to other members. If different organisational arrangements are adopted, explain the reasons publicly, together with how these deliver the same impact

#### We will do this through the following:

- Chief Executive / Chief Financial Officer chairs Senior Management Team meetings
- Chief Executive / Chief Financial Officer job description
- Committee terms of reference
- Constitution
- Job descriptions / specifications
- Publication of Senior Management Team pay and member allowances
- Record of decision making and supporting materials
- SMT Structure

**Supporting principle:** ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard

#### The council is required to:

- determine a Scheme of Delegation and reserve powers within the Constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required
- make a Chief Executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management
- ensure that the authority's governance arrangements allow the CFO direct access to the CEO and to other leadership team members

- Annual review of the effectiveness of the council's internal audit arrangements report
- Budget monitoring process
- Chief Executive / Chief Financial Officer chairs Senior Management Team meetings
- Codes of Conduct
- Constitution
- Contract with East Kent Audit Partnership
- Core values and behaviours
- Corporate Structure
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Financial Risk Assessment
- Gifts and hospitality register
- Internal Audit Plan

- develop protocols to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained
- make a senior officer (the Section 151
   Officer) responsible to the authority for
   ensuring that appropriate advice is given on
   all financial matters, for keeping proper
   financial records and accounts, and for
   maintaining an effective system of internal
   financial control
- appoint a professionally qualified CFO whose core responsibilities include those set out in the Statement on the Role of the CFO in Local Government and ensure that they are properly understood throughout the authority
- ensure that the CFO:
  - leads the promotion and delivery by the whole organisation of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively
  - has a line of professional accountability for finance staff throughout the organisation
- ensure that budget calculations are robust and reserves adequate, in line with CIPFA's guidance
- ensure that appropriate management accounting systems, functions and controls are in place so that finances are kept under review on a regular basis. These systems, functions and controls should apply consistently to all activities including partnerships arrangements, outsourcing or where the authority is acting in an enabling role
- make a senior officer (usually the Monitoring Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with

- Internal Audits of financial systems
- Job descriptions / specifications
- Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Member / officer protocol
- Monitoring Officer provision
- Officer Employment Procedure Rules
- Performance management system
- Performance reporting
- Register of Interests
- Reports to members / officers on financial matters
- Scheme of Delegation
- Section 151 provision
- SMT/Cabinet
- Standing Orders
- Statutory reports
- Whistleblowing Code

**Supporting principle:** ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other

#### The council is required to:

#### develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles

 set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable)

- Annual budget and Council Tax consultation
- Appraisal process
- Budget monitoring
- Collaboration agreements and supporting SLA's
- Core values and behaviours
- Corporate Plan

- ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery
- ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated
- establish a medium term business and financial planning process to deliver strategic objectives including:
  - a medium terms financial strategy to ensure sustainable finances
  - a robust annual budget process that ensures financial balance
  - a monitoring process that enables this to be delivered
- ensure that these are subject to regular review to confirm the continuing relevance of assumptions used
- when working in partnership, ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority
- · when working in partnership:
  - ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership
  - ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions

- East Kent HR system / i-Trent
- East Kent HR Service Level Agreements
- Local indicators
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Member / officer protocol
- Partnership Framework
- Partnership Register
- Pay and conditions policies and practices
- Performance Management Framework
- Performance reporting
- Public consultation
- Service plans
- Thanet Vision 2030

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

Supporting principle: ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance The council is required to: We will do this through the following: Annual Governance Statement ensure that the authority's leadership sets a Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy tone for the organisation by creating a Appraisal process climate of openness, support and respect Codes of Conduct ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members Core values and behaviours Customer feedback system and staff, or work between members and Declaration of interest protocols staff and between the authority, its partners Financial regulations and the community are defined and Gifts and hospitality register communicated through codes of conduct Leadership programme and protocols Member / officer protocol put in place arrangements to ensure that Performance management system members and employees of the authority

are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice

- Senior Management Team
- **Standing Orders**
- Whistleblowing Code

#### Supporting principle: ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

#### The council is required to:

- develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners
- put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice
- ensure that systems and processes for financial administration, financial control and protection of the authority's resources and assets are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice
- develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee
- use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority
- in pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively

### We will do this through the following:

- Appraisal process
- Approved procedures and policies
- Audit reports
- Codes of Conduct
- Committee terms of reference
- Core values and behaviours
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Independent chair of Standards
- Internal audit check of compliance and approved procedures and policies
- **Kent Compact**
- Partnership Framework
- Managers Forum
- Professional body guidance documents (eg CIPFA)
- Regular reporting to the council
- Report template
- Staff and member development briefings
- Staff consultations
- Standards Committee annual report
- **Thanet Compact**

#### 4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective Scrutiny and managing risk

Supporting principles: being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny

#### The council is required to:

- develop and maintain an effective Scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible
- ensure an effective internal audit function is resourced and maintained
- develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria. rationale and considerations on which decisions are based

- Annual review of the effectiveness of the Governance and Audit Committee and Annual Report
- Codes of Conduct
- Customer feedback system
- Decision making protocols
- Declaration of interest protocols
- East Kent Audit Partnership's Balanced Scorecard
- Governance and Audit Committee terms of reference
- Overview and Scrutiny Panel annual report

- put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice
- develop and maintain an effective Audit Committee which is independent of the Executive and Scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee
- ensure that the authority's governance arrangements allow the CFO direct access to the audit committee and external audit
- ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints

- Record of decision making and supporting materials
- Regular meetings between Chief Executive and External Audit
- Regular meetings between Deputy 151
   Officer and Internal Audit
- Regular pre-meets between Chief Executive and Chair of Governance and Audit Committee
- Report of Ombudsmen findings
- Scrutiny Panel reports, minutes and working group papers
- Training Development Plan for members and officers
- Learning from complaints and comments

**Supporting principle:** having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants / needs

#### The council is required to:

- ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications
- ensure the provision of clear, well presented, timely, complete and accurate information and reports to budget managers and senior officers on the budgetary and financial performance of the authority
- ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal and financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately
- ensure the authority's governance arrangements allow the CFO to bring influence to bear on all material decisions
- ensure that advice is provided on the levels of reserves and balances in line with good practice guidelines (LAAP – Local Authority Reserves and Balances)

#### We will do this through the following:

- Approved procedures and policies
- Article 12 Officers
- Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules
- Budget monitoring
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Member / officer protocol
- Partnership Framework
- Performance Board
- Performance reporting
- Report template
- Use of 'legal' and 'financial' implications in report

Supporting principle: ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place

#### The council is required to:

- ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs
- ensure the authority's arrangements for financial and internal control and for managing risk are addressed in annual governance reports

- Annual Audit Letter (External Audit)
- Annual Governance Statement
- Annual Internal Audit Report
- Authorised Signatory process
- Budget management devolvement
- Core values and behaviours
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Financial Services Team structure
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Procurement Strategy

- ensure the authority puts in place effective internal financial controls covering codified guidance, budgetary systems, supervision, management review and monitoring, physical safeguards, segregation of duties, accounting procedures, information systems and authorisation and approval process
- ensure that effective arrangements for whistleblowing are in place to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access
- Risk Management Process
- Risk Management Strategy
- Senior Management Team
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Up to date risk register
- Whistleblowing Code

**Supporting principle:** using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area

#### The council is required to:

- actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities
- recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law
- observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of administrative law - rationality, legality and natural justice - into their procedures and decision making process

#### We will do this through the following:

- Constitution
- Job descriptions / specifications
- Monitoring Officer provision
- Section 151 provision
- Standing Orders

## 5. Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

Supporting principle: making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles We will do this through the following: The council is required to: Appointment process provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Appraisal process Chief Executive / Chief Financial Officer job members and officers to update their description knowledge on a regular basis Competency Framework ensure that the statutory officers have the Continual Professional Development skills, resources and support necessary to Financial Procedure Rules perform effectively in their roles and that Financial Services Team structure these roles are properly understood Induction programme throughout the authority Job descriptions / specifications ensure the CFO has the skills, knowledge, Personal Development Plans experience and resources to perform Post Entry Training effectively in both the financial and non Service plans financial areas of their role Staff and member development briefings review the scope of the CFO's other Talent management programme management responsibilities to ensure Training Development Plan for members financial matters are not compromised

and officers provide the finance function with the resources, expertise and systems necessary to perform its role effectively Supporting principle: developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group We will do this through the following: The council is required to: Appraisal process assess the skills required by members and **Financial Procedure Rules** officers and make a commitment to develop Governance and Audit Committee training those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively sessions Job description template embed financial competencies in person Member role descriptions specifications and appraisals Performance management system ensure that councillors' roles and Training Development Plan for members responsibilities for monitoring financial and officers performance/budget management are clear, that they have adequate access to financial skills and are provided with appropriate financial training on an ongoing basis to help them discharge their responsibilities develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the Executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs Supporting principle: 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 The council is required to: We will do this through the following: Change management programme ensure that effective arrangements are in **Equality Impact Assessments** place designed to encourage individuals Leadership programme from all sections of the community to Partnership Framework engage with, contribute to and participate in Public consultation process the work of the authority Social media ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development

## 6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability

Supporting principle: exercising leadership through a robust Scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develop constructive accountability relationships

The council is required to:

• make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what

• consider those institutional stakeholders to

- whom they are accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationship and any changes required
- produce an annual report on the activity of the Scrutiny function

**Supporting principle:** 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

#### The council is required to:

- ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively
- hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality
- ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands
- establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result
- on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period
- ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so

#### We will do this through the following:

- Annual performance report
- Communication Strategy
- Constitution
- Corporate Plan
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Freedom of Information process
- Internet protocol
- Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Partnership Framework
- Processes for dealing with competing demands within the community
- Public consultation
- Public meetings
- Publication Scheme
- Residents panels
- Social media
- Statement of Accounts

**Supporting principle:** making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

# The council is required to: develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted

and involved in decision making

- Communication Strategy
- Employee Council terms of reference
- Trade Union recognition agreement
- Workforce Forum

### **Document History**

| Version | Date        | Agreed by                      | Minute ref       |
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