

## The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

### Local Code of Governance

#### Introduction

The Council is responsible for ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging its responsibility, the Council is required to put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which include arrangements for the management of risk.

RBK has approved and adopted a Local Code of Governance to meet these responsibilities and demonstrate its commitment to good governance. The Code reflects the following seven core principles and requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* and sets out how the Council meets them:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.**
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits**
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability**

The Code was first adopted in April 2005 and has been reviewed every two years since then. The latest review took place in September 2017.

The Code is available on the Council's Intranet for staff and is also published on the Council's web site.

What is Governance?	3
Delivering Good Governance in Local Government	3
What is a Local Code and why is it needed?	3
What does good governance mean?	4
How is compliance with the local code undertaken?	4
What is RBK's approach to meeting the core principles of good governance?	5
Core Principle A	5
RBK meets these principles by	7
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	8
Core Principle B	9
RBK meets these principles by	10
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	11
Core Principle C	12
RBK meets these principles by	13
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	14
Core Principle D	14
RBK meets these principles by	15
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	16
Core Principle E	16
RBK meets these principles by	18
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	19
Core Principle F	20
RBK meets these principles by:	21
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	23
Core Principle G	23
RBK meets these principles by:	24
Key Activities, Policies and Bodies	25
The Nolan Committee	27

## **What is Governance?**

Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.

To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector entities must try to achieve their entity's objectives while acting in the public interest at all times.

Acting in the public interest implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.

## **Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA/SOLACE 2016)**

Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes for citizens and service users. Good governance enables an authority to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk. All authorities should aim to meet the standards of the best and governance arrangements should not only be sound but also be seen to be sound.

The function of governance is to ensure that local authorities, working with connected organisations and partnerships, fulfil their purpose and achieve their intended outcomes for citizens and service users and operate in an effective, efficient, economic and ethical manner.

## **What is a Local Code and why is it needed?**

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) is committed to the principles of good governance. It recognises the importance of conducting its business in accordance with the law and proper standards, and ensuring that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

To ensure that its affairs are managed in a way that achieves the highest standards of governance, RBK recognises that it needs a robust and effective system of governance set out in a local code. To this end the authority has approved and adopted this Code of Governance which reflects the seven core principles and requirements (set out below) of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*, 2016.

The local code defines the principles that underpin the work of the Council. By publishing this Code, which shows how the principles of good governance will be applied, the Council is demonstrating its commitment to good governance.

## **What does good governance mean?**

Acting in the public interest requires a commitment to and effective arrangements for meeting the following seven core principles, taken from the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*:

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Each of the core principles has a number of more detailed underpinning sub-principles. RBK's approach to each core principle, and their underpinning principles, is set out below.

## **How is compliance with the local code undertaken?**

RBK takes steps to demonstrate that its governance systems and processes are monitored for their effectiveness in practice, and subject to review on a continuing basis to ensure that they are up to date.

To do this, the principles of good governance have been translated into a framework which seeks to:

- Review our existing governance arrangements against the Local Code.
- Maintain an up-to-date Local Code of Governance, including arrangements for ensuring its ongoing application and effectiveness.
- On an annual basis, prepare an Annual Governance Statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which we comply with the Local Code, including how we have monitored the effectiveness of our governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period.

## **What is RBK's approach to meeting the core principles of good governance?**

### **Core Principle A**

**Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.**

Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions across all activities and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

### **Underpinning principles: Behaving with integrity**

- Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation.
- Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).
- Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions.
- Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively.

### **Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values**

- Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance.
- Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation.
- Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values.
- Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the organisation.

### **Respecting the rule of law**

- Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.
- Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders, and members, are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.
- Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.
- Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

## **RBK meets these principles by:**

- maintaining shared values (being Open, Innovative and Smart) including management and leadership values both for the organisation and its staff reflecting public expectations about the conduct and behaviour of individuals and groups within and associated with the authority
- using the authority'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, agreeing a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values are 'alive' and demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively
- adopting formal Codes of Conduct defining the standards of personal behaviour expected of Members and officers, and work between the authority's partners and the community
- having arrangements to ensure that Members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and having appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice
- having arrangements to promote equalities, diversity and good people management
- having arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitoring continuing compliance in practice
- having arrangements for whistleblowing to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access
- maintaining an effective Audit, Governance and Standards Committee which acts as the main means to raise awareness and takes the lead in ensuring high standards of conduct are firmly embedded within the local culture.
- ensuring that Officer and Member Codes of Conduct are kept up to date and adhered to.
- maintaining a system of staff appraisals reflecting Council culture and values.
- ensuring Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are kept up to date and adhered to.
- having a scheme of delegated and reserved 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 ensuring that it is monitored and updated when required
- ensuring that effective management arrangements are in place at the top of the organisation to provide effective governance and ensuring that effective mechanisms exist to provide and monitor service delivery

- making the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management
- making a senior officer (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
- making a senior officer (the Monitoring Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations and other relevant statements of good practice are complied with
- ensuring that the Council's leadership mechanisms are clearly articulated and disseminated.
- maintaining a performance management framework which translates priorities and objectives into performance targets for staff through Service Plans and appraisals
- making a senior officer (the SIRO Senior Information Risk Officer) responsible for leading a culture of good information management, own the overall information risk policy and procedures and ensure that information risks are addressed and managed appropriately, flexing to an ever changing environment.

### **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Whistleblowing policy
- ❖ Council's constitution
- ❖ Local Code of Governance
- ❖ Appraisal process
- ❖ Staff consultations
- ❖ Staff and Member Development Programme
- ❖ Council Mentoring Scheme
- ❖ Kingston Plan
- ❖ Destination Kingston
- ❖ Our Kingston Programme
- ❖ Kingston Strategic Partnership
- ❖ Kingston Strategic Partnership annual review and conference
- ❖ Counter Fraud and Corruption Framework and Anti-Bribery Policy and procedures
- ❖ Equalities Scheme
- ❖ Kingston Race and Equalities Council and the Equality and Community Cohesion Strategy
- ❖ Councillor Recall Scheme
- ❖ Member and Officer Codes of Conduct
- ❖ Contract Standing Orders

- ❖ Financial Regulations
- ❖ Contract reviews of external providers of services
- ❖ Registers of Interest for Members and officers
- ❖ Register of gifts and hospitality offered to members and officers
- ❖ Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

## **Core Principle B**

### **Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

Local government is run for the public good, organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

#### **Underpinning principles**

##### **Openness**

- Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness.
- Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided.
- Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.
- Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/courses of action.

##### **Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders**

NB institutional stakeholders are the other organisations that local government needs to work with to improve services and outcomes (such as commercial partners and suppliers as well as other public or third sector organisations) or organisations to which they are accountable.

- Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.

- Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.
- Ensuring that partnerships are based on:
  - Trust
  - a shared commitment to change
  - a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.

## **Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively**

- Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.
- Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.
- Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.
- Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how views have been taken into account.
- Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.
- Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users.

### **RBK meets these principles by:**

- making clear to itself, all staff and the community, to whom it is accountable and for what
- considering the key partners and those institutional stakeholders to whom it is accountable and assessing the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required
- establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders and having monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively
- having arrangements to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and have explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands
- having a clear policy on the types of issues on which it will meaningfully consult or engage with the public and service users including a feedback mechanism for those consulted
- maintaining a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making
- supporting and engaging staff in organisational change

- having effective systems to protect the rights of staff, policies for whistleblowing which are accessible to staff and those contracting with the authority, and arrangements for the support of whistle-blowers
- publishing reports on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance
- publishing 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
- having effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints
- ensuring that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensuring 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
- holding meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality with extensive opportunities for public participation during the meeting
- when working in partnership, ensuring that engagement and consultation undertaken by the partnership is integrated with wider strategic and service planning.
- ensuring effective scrutiny of the decision making process through the involvement of Opposition Councillors on all Strategic and Regulatory Committees and a separate Community Call in Process
- Having a structure of Neighbourhood Committees that provide opportunities for engagement at a more local level.

### **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Neighbourhood Committees
- ❖ Neighbourhood Managers
- ❖ Neighbourhood Community Plans
- ❖ Community Engagement Strategy
- ❖ Conversation Forums
- ❖ Community Call-in process
- ❖ Kingston Strategic Partnership
- ❖ Kingston Strategic Partnership Annual Review
- ❖ Equality Impact Assessments
- ❖ Complaints Procedure
- ❖ Website petitions
- ❖ Constitution
- ❖ Kingston Plan

- ❖ Destination Kingston
- ❖ Directorate Consultative Groups
- ❖ Whistleblowing Procedure
- ❖ All in One Survey
- ❖ Public participation at meetings
- ❖ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- ❖ Open Data on the website
- ❖ Minutes and recordings of Committee meetings available on the website and webcasting of meetings

## **Core Principle C**

### **Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits**

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable.

Decisions should further the organisation's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

### **Underpinning Principles**

#### **Defining outcomes**

- Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.
- Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer.
- Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.
- Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes.
- Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available

#### **Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**

- Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decisions about service provision.
- Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the

organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints

- Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs.
- Ensuring fair access to services.

## **RBK meets these principles by:**

- ensuring that the authority's vision, strategic plans, priorities, outcomes and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, based on an ongoing analysis of needs and putting the customer first whilst seeking to provide excellent value for money, and in consultation with the local community, strategic partners, staff, suppliers and other key stakeholders
- making a clear statement of the authority's purpose and vision and using it as a basis for strategic and service planning, with partners, to shape the Kingston Plan and *Destination* Kingston
- being clear about the quality of services to be provided through its Shaping Principles, Supporting Principles, eligibility criteria and Commissioning Framework and ensuring that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available. The authority ensures that this information is reflected in the Kingston Plan, *Destination* Kingston (the authority's medium term service and financial strategy) and other resourcing plans in order to ensure improvement
- deciding how value for money is to be measured and making sure that the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively is available. The authority ensures that the results are reflected in the Kingston Plan, *Destination* Kingston, in service plans and in reviewing the work of the authority
- when working in partnership ensuring that there is a common vision underpinning the work of the partnership that is understood and agreed by all partners ensuring financial planning is integrated with strategic and service planning on a medium to long term basis, identifying the scope for making efficiencies, and engaging stakeholders as appropriate
- ensuring the vision, strategic plans, priorities, outcomes and targets shape commissioning and procurement, engaging stakeholders as appropriate
- publishing the resulting vision, strategic plans, priorities, outcomes and targets
- reviewing and updating on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its impact on the authority's governance arrangements
- having effective arrangements to deal with failure in service delivery.

## **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Destination Kingston (Medium Term Service and Financial Plan)
- ❖ The Kingston Plan
- ❖ Annual Report
- ❖ Audit Reports
- ❖ VfM Audits
- ❖ Performance Reports
- ❖ Complaints Policy
- ❖ Our Kingston Programme
- ❖ The Kingston Strategic Partnership, annual conference and review
- ❖ Strategic Leadership Team
- ❖ Forward Plan (Strategic Committees)
- ❖ Annual accounts
- ❖ Annual Governance Statement

## **Core Principle D**

### **Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes**

Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions (courses of action). Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed frequently to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

### **Underpinning principles**

#### **Determining interventions**

- Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided.

- Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.

## **Planning interventions**

- Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets.
- Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.
- Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks.
- Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances.
- Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured.
- Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.
- Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan.
- Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.

## **Optimising achievement of intended outcomes**

- Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints.
- Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.
- Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.
- Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning.

**RBK meets these principles by:**

- Ensuring options to achieve desired outcomes are set out in committee reports, are analysed and associated risks identified.
- Undertaking widespread internal and external consultation through the Kingston Conversations programme (Neighbourhood, Budget and Staff Conversations) and periodic residents' surveys.
- Targeted consultations with service users and others in relation to service changes.
- Maintaining robust planning and control cycles through the performance management regime, Annual Governance Statement process, commissioning cycle and, currently, the development of a new 'corporate plan'.
- Maintenance of an effective risk management process for shared services and other collaborative arrangements.
- Maintenance of robust arrangements at officer level in relation to performance management and data, through the data observatory.
- Robust financial planning and budget processes with ongoing review through the Finance and Performance Support Board, SLT and regular reports to Treasury Committee.
- Building the achievement of social value into our commissioning processes.

### **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Destination Kingston (Medium Term Service and Financial Plan)
- ❖ Budget Conversations
- ❖ Kingston Forums
- ❖ Kingston Conversations
- ❖ Corporate Risk Register
- ❖ One Council Commissioning Framework
- ❖ Performance Reports
- ❖ Community Engagement Portal
- ❖ Strategic Leadership Team
- ❖ Finance and Performance Support Board reviews
- ❖ Forward Plan (Strategic Committees)
- ❖ Outcome based budgeting
- ❖ Annual Governance Statement

### **Core Principle E**

**Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership**

## **and the individuals within it**

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an organisation operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of individual staff members. Leadership in local government is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

## **Underpinning principles**

### **Developing the entity's capacity**

- Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness,,,,.
- Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.,,,,.
- Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.
- Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.

### **Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals**

- Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.
- Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body.

- Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority.
- Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by:
  - ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged.
  - ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis.
  - ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external

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- Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation.
- Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections.
- Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs,,,,.
- Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing

### **RBK meets these principles by:**

- assessing the skills required by Members and officers and making a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively
- ensuring there is a One Council Induction Programme available to all new staff and Members

- ensuring effective workforce planning for the medium to longer term
  - ensuring that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority
  - providing induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis
  - developing skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed
  - having arrangements for reviewing the performance of Members and agreeing an action plan which might for example aim to address any training or development needs
  - having 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
  - having arrangements in place for Members and officers to encourage participation, development and succession planning
  - when working in partnership, ensuring that partners individually and the partnership collectively share responsibility for appointing people to the partnership who have the required skills and are at an appropriate level
  - ensuring that the following disciplines are embedded into the culture of the authority, with Members and managers at all levels recognising that these disciplines are part of their role/job for the authority and in partnership:
    - people management
    - financial management
    - asset management
    - use of ICT
    - risk management (including the risks of fraud and corruption, health & safety, internal control and business continuity management)
    - performance management
    - project management.
- 
- having a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of all Member committees and other bodies
  - having a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of Members and officers and protocols to guide relationships and communications between them, including a protocol to ensure that the Leader and the Chief Executive negotiate their respective roles early in the

relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained

- setting out the terms and conditions for remuneration of Members and officers and operating an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel for senior staff (subject to and having regard to any nationally negotiated agreements).

### **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Council's Constitution
- ❖ Scheme of Delegation
- ❖ Leader and Chief Executive Relationship Protocol
- ❖ Members' Allowances Scheme
- ❖ Member/Officer Protocol
- ❖ Member Learning and Development Programme
- ❖ Councillor Recall Scheme
- ❖ People Strategy
- ❖ Managing Workforce Change Strategy
- ❖ Evolve e-learning modules
- ❖ Appraisal process
- ❖ Mentoring Scheme
- ❖ Internal Communications Policy
- ❖ Job Descriptions/specifications
- ❖ Staff involvement intranet pages
- ❖ Employee Involvement Policy
- ❖ Induction Programme
- ❖ Corporate Risk Register
- ❖ Risk Management Framework
- ❖ Business Continuity Strategy and Plans
- ❖ Information Governance Framework
- ❖ Project Management Toolkit

## **Core Principle F**

### **Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**

Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and are crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.

A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability.

It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny are in place as a key part of accountable decision making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful service delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.

### **Underpinning principles**

#### **Managing risk**

- Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making.
- Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.
- Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated

#### **Managing performance**

- Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review.
- Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.  
Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making
- Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement.
- Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements)

### **Robust internal control**

- Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives.
- Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis.
- Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place.
- Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.
- Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group/function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:
  - provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment.
  - that its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.

### **Managing data**

- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data.
- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when

sharing data with other bodies.

- Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision making and performance monitoring

### **Strong public financial management**

- Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.
- Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls

### **RBK meets these principles by:**

- ensuring that those making decisions, including in partnership, are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.
- actively recognising the limits of lawful activity but also striving to utilise powers to the full benefit of communities.
- observing all specific legislative requirements, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular integrating the key principles of administrative law – rationality, proportionality, legality and natural justice – into procedures and decision making (the principles of good administrative decision making are set out in Article 12 of Part 2 to the Constitution).
- ensuring that professional advice on legal and financial matters is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately when decisions have significant legal or financial implications.
- ensuring that decisions are based on a full understanding and evaluation of the different options available – including the likely costs, risks and rewards from the different options
- ensuring the environmental and equalities impacts are understood before decisions are made
- having arrangements so that conflicts of interest on behalf of Members and officers can be avoided when making decisions and having appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice
- when working in partnership, having protocols for working together which include a shared understanding of respective roles and responsibilities of each organisation in decision making
- when working in partnership, ensuring that there are robust procedures for scrutinising decisions and behaviours and that these decisions and behaviours

are compliant with any local authority rules/codes or comply with any rules/codes developed for the purpose of the partnership

- maintaining open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based
- encouraging effective scrutiny of decision making through the involvement of Opposition Councillors on the Strategic and Regulatory Committees
- maintaining objective, adequate and effective assurance and audit functions of governance, risk and control processes
- maintaining an effective Audit , Governance and Standards Committee for overview of its governance, risk and control processes which is independent of the Strategic Committees and which is responsible for Standards and Codes of Conduct, etc. which lie at the heart of decision making and awareness raising on standards issues.
- Publishing and maintaining a Whistleblowing policy.

## **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Member Code of Conduct
- ❖ Constitution
- ❖ Strategic Leadership Team
- ❖ Monitoring Officer
- ❖ Shared Legal Services (SLLp)
- ❖ Section 151 Officer
- ❖ Audit Governance & Standards Committee
- ❖ Member Officer Protocol
- ❖ Member Planning Protocol
- ❖ Employee Code of Conduct
- ❖ Information Governance Framework
- ❖ Risk Management Framework
- ❖ Evolve training
- ❖ Whistleblowing policy
- ❖ Registers of Interests for Members and Officers
- ❖ Equality Impact Assessments

## **Core Principle G**

### **Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability**

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.

### **Underpinning principles**

#### **Implementing good practice in transparency**

- Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience

and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.

- Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.

## **Implementing good practices in reporting**

- Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way.
- Ensuring members and senior management own the results reported.
- Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the annual governance statement). „
- Ensuring that this Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.
- Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations.

## **Assurance and effective accountability**

- Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.
- Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon.
- Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.
- Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.
- Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

## **RBK meets these principles by:**

- Ensuring that reports to committees, and other bodies, are written in clear English, in a style appropriate to the audience and readily accessible on the Council's website. In relation to committee reports providing guidance to report

authors to ensure they follow a common format and take into account other considerations (e.g. finance, legal, risk).

- Reporting annually on Destination Kingston (the Medium Term Service and Financial Plan) and an annual report on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources by providing information on the council's website to meet the Government's transparency code.
- Making an explicit commitment to promote and demonstrate the principles of good governance, through this Code, and through the Constitution and other supporting documents when working in partnership:
  - ensuring that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership
  - ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of the partners are agreed so that there is effective leadership and accountability
  - ensuring that representatives or organisations make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions
  
- Publication of the Local Code of Governance on the Intranet (for staff) and the Council's website.
- The production of an Annual Governance Statement, approved by the Strategic Leadership Team and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee assessing the extent to which the authority complies with the principles of good governance and identifying any areas for improvement.
- The production of an action plan addressing areas for improvement identified and ongoing monitoring of its implementation.
- Regular reports to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on the implementation of recommendations made by external auditors
- Provision of an effective Internal Audit service through the South West London Audit Partnership with regular reports to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on the work of the service.
- Regular reports to the Strategic Leadership Team and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on the implementation of the more significant recommendations arising from internal audit reports.
- Meeting the requirements of the Government's Transparency Code and publishing a range of information on the website.
- Exploring opportunities to invite peer challenge and similar activities with a view to making further improvements based on learning derived from such initiatives.

## **Key Activities, Policies and Bodies**

- ❖ Local Code of Governance
- ❖ Constitution
- ❖ Destination Kingston
- ❖ Annual Governance Statement
- ❖ Annual Governance Statement action plan
- ❖ Leadership and Management Framework
- ❖ Section 151 Officer
- ❖ Complaints Procedure
- ❖ Transparency Code information on the website
- ❖ Minutes and recordings of Committee meetings available on the website
- ❖ Webcasting of meetings
- ❖ Register of Interests for Members and Officers
- ❖ Whistleblowing procedure
- ❖ Scheme of Delegation
- ❖ Member Officer Protocol
- ❖ Leader and Chief Executive Protocol
- ❖ Head of Paid Service
- ❖ Monitoring Officer
- ❖ Senior Information Risk Officer
- ❖ Service Plans
- ❖ Appraisals
- ❖ Members' Allowances Scheme
- ❖ Internal Audit contract reviews
- ❖ Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
- ❖ External audit reports
- ❖ Internal Audit follow up reports
- ❖ Bench-marking against other authorities

**The Nolan Committee (1995)** identified and defined seven general principles of conduct which should underpin public life, and recommended that all public service bodies draw up codes of conduct incorporating these principles. These principles of public life are:

**Selflessness:** Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and actions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**The Relevant Authorities (General Principles) order 2001** outlined three additional principles of conduct to those identified by the Nolan Committee:

**Respect for others:** Holders of public office should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

**Duty to uphold the law:** Holders of public office should uphold the law, and on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

**Stewardship:** Holders of public office should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

**(Note: The latter three principles were removed from the Code of Conduct for Members by the changes to the Standards regime introduced by the Localism Act 2011)**