

Council Report

Audit Committee Meeting – 28th November 2023

Title

Code of Corporate Governance 2023

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No.

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Judith Badger, Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Services.

Report Author

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-wide

Report Summary

In April 2016 CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) published revised guidance on delivering good governance in local government. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance was rewritten at that time to set out how it would comply with this new guidance. There have been no new revisions to the guidance since then.

It is good practice to review and revise the Council Code on an annual basis. The Corporate Governance Group has completed this review. The revised Code is presented here for consideration by the Audit Committee.

Recommendations

The Audit Committee is asked to:

- Consider the refreshed version of the Code of Corporate Governance and;
- After consideration, advise if any amendments or further development work deemed necessary.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Code of Corporate Governance 2023 with Tracked Changes

Appendix 2 Final Code of Corporate Governance 2023

Background Papers

"Delivering Good Governance in Local Government", published by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) in April 2016.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No.

Council Approval Required

No.

Exempt from the Press and Public

No.

Code of Corporate Governance 2023

1. Background

- 1.1 In April 2016, CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) published revised guidance on delivering good governance in Local government. The Council's Code of Corporate Governance was rewritten to set out how it complied with this new guidance. The new guidance set out seven key principles of good governance and the Council's new Code reflected these principles. The Code was presented to the Audit Committee in February 2017 with annual updates each November since then.
- 1.2 Although there have been no subsequent changes to the guidance, an annual review of the Code has been completed to ensure it remains up to date and relevant to the Council. Amendments have been made to include minor amendments where necessary and are less extensive than in previous years.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Good governance leads to good management, performance, public engagement, stewardship of public money and, through all this, good outcomes for citizens and service users.
- 2.2 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of governance in order to fulfil its responsibilities. Integrity, openness and accountability are fundamental principles by which the Council operates, and these are specifically reflected in two of the Council's values – "Honest" (Being open and truthful in everything we do) and "Accountable" (We own our decisions, we do what we say, and we acknowledge and learn from our mistakes).
- 2.3 The guidance sets out the seven key principles which underpin the governance of each local government organisation. The Rotherham Code follows these principles and demonstrates how they are applied and evidenced in practice. The seven key principles are:
 - Behaving with Integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law
 - Ensuring Openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
 - Determining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
 - Developing the Councils capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
 - Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- 2.4 The first two principles underpin the operation of the other five and represent a change in approach from earlier versions of the Code. As can also be seen from the list above, the Council's own values align closely to the key principles in the CIPFA/SOLACE code.

2.6 The Council has adopted this approach in producing its Code of Corporate Governance to give citizens and customers a clear understanding of how the Council manages its decision making, service planning, service delivery and accountability processes, how it ensures that the Council sets out its vision and priorities and how it provides effective and efficient outcomes to its citizens and customers.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government", published by CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) is widely acknowledged as the authoritative guide in this area.

3.2 All Local Authorities within the UK construct their Codes of Corporate Governance utilising the methodology advocated by this guidance. The framework was published in April 2016, and it is important that the Council complies with this code. There have been no changes to the guidance in the last year. An annual review of the Rotherham Code has been completed by the Corporate Governance Group.

3.3 The Audit Committee is invited to review the attached Code and provide any comments. For ease of reference a version showing tracked changes from the previous year is attached, along with the final draft Code.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 Research has been undertaken into sector codes of governance. The attached Code takes account of current arrangements in Rotherham.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The refreshed code is to be presented to the Audit Committee for consideration at its meeting on 28th November 2023.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial and procurement implications associated with the refreshed code although, previously stated, good governance leads to good stewardship of public money

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no immediate implications associated with the proposals.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 There are no immediate implications associated with the proposals.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 There are no immediate implications associated with the proposals.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no immediate implications associated with the proposals.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no immediate implications associated with the proposals.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The implementation of an effective Governance framework is designed to minimise the Authority's exposure to risk.

14. Accountable Officer

Simon Dennis, Corporate Improvement and Risk Manager

Approvals Obtained from:-

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