



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**UPDATED DRAFT** LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE  
GOVERNANCE

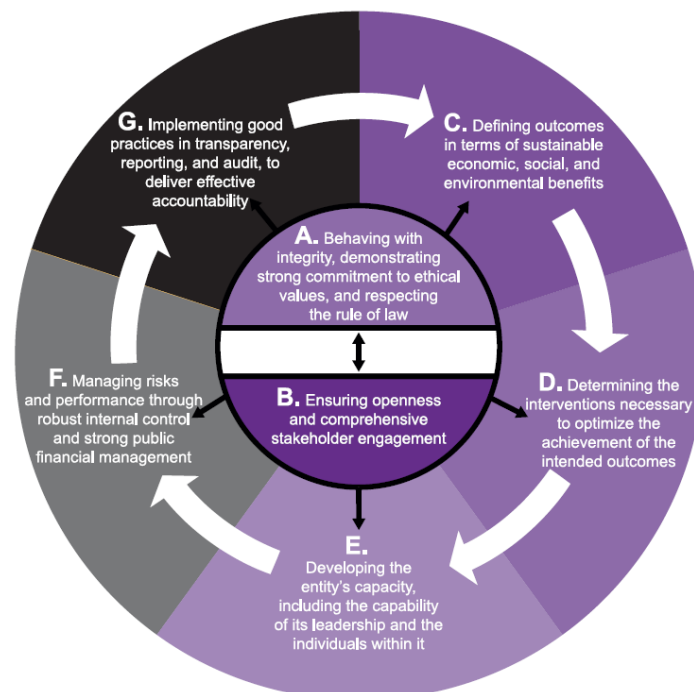
June 2023

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council, in compiling its Local Code of Corporate Governance, has adopted the principles contained within the *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: framework (2016)* developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE).

## 2. The Governance Framework

- 2.1 The diagram below, taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014) (the 'International Framework'), illustrates the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other.



- 2.2 The Framework comprises two Core Principles (A & B) and five Supporting Principles (C to G).

- 2.3 The core principles permeate the implementation of the supporting principles with the need for the whole Council to be committed to improving governance on a continual basis through a process of evaluation and review.
- 2.4 The governance framework in place within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council comprises the systems, processes and cultural values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. This framework enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

### **3. Defining Governance**

- 3.1 The International Framework defines governance as follows:

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

- 3.2 The International Framework also states that:

*To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies<sup>1</sup> 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.*

- 3.3 The Council's commitment to good governance is centred on the requirement to meet statutory obligations and deliver its Corporate Plan Priorities, and is based on the seven principles of *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: framework (2016)*.

**For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, governance is about ensuring that the Council does the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.**

---

<sup>1</sup> In local government, the governing body is the Full Council.

#### 4. The Governance Framework in place within Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

4.1 The Council has in place a range of policies, procedures, systems and processes that form its overall governance arrangements. These arrangements are in line with the *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: framework (2016)*, many of which are set out within its [Constitution](#). The following summary provides an overview of the Council's Governance Framework:

##### **Core Principle A - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.**

The Council is accountable not only for how much it spends, but also for how it uses the resources under its stewardship. This includes accountability for performance, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes achieved. In addition, the Council has 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, it can demonstrate the appropriateness of decisions and actions, and have arrangements in place to encourage and ensure compliance with ethical values and to respect the rule of law.

~~Good governance flows from a shared ethos and culture, as well as from systems and structures. As a public body, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council expects all representatives (i.e. Members and Officers) to conduct their duties with the highest levels of honesty and integrity.~~

The Council has a series of codes, protocols and policies in place, and support and training is provided in these areas to help ensure elected Members and Officers understand what is required.

##### **Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- Elected Councillor and Officer Codes of Conduct - setting out the standards of behaviour to be followed based on the principles of integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.
- Rules of Procedure – covering Council, Open Government, Access to Information, Budget and Policy Framework, Executive, Overview and Scrutiny, Officer Employment and Contract and Financial Procedure Rules. The rules set out arrangements to be followed by elected Councillors and Officers when conducting the Council's business with the aim of publicly demonstrating accountability and openness.

- Standards Committee - the role of which includes, amongst other things, promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected Councillors.
- Whistle-blowing Policy – promoting the highest possible standards of service and setting out how workers can bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of the Council.
- Anti-fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy.
- Gifts and hospitality Policy.
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints – setting out how the Council handles and responds to feedback (complaints, compliments and comments).
- Officer Guide.

**Core Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.**

Local government is run for the public good and the Council is committed to ensuring openness in the delivery of its activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders.

~~The Council is committed to being open and engaging effectively with stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.~~

**Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- A Publication Scheme that aims to advise citizens how to request public information the Authority holds.
- Clear and open Corporate & Service Specific Privacy Notices.
- Forward plans for Committee meetings together with the matters to be considered, where appropriate.
- Stakeholder engagement.

**Supporting Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.**

The long-term nature and impact of the Council's work requires it to define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the Council's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from stakeholders, including citizens, service users and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands, determining priorities and finite resources.

**Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- The Council's Performance Management Framework – defining outcomes based on need.
- Corporate Plan and Service Delivery Plans.
- Quarterly Performance Report (including Risk Register up dates).
- ~~Risk Management Strategy.~~
- ~~Annual Revenue Budget Strategy and three year Capital Programme.~~
- ~~Medium Term Financial Plan.~~
- ~~Scrutiny Committees.~~

**Supporting Principle D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.**

The Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Robust decision making is required to enable priorities and intended outcomes to be delivered in an efficient and effective way, and decisions reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure the achievement of outcomes is optimised.

**Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- Evidence based decision-making arrangements.
- Monitoring and oversight of priorities.
- Annual Revenue Budget Strategy and three-year Capital Programme.
- Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Scrutiny Committees.

**Supporting Principle E - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.**

The Council needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and support the achievement of intended outcomes. It must ensure it has both the capacity to deliver its priorities and for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which the Council operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of staff members. Leadership in the Council is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

**Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- Corporate and Service Self Evaluation process.
- Corporate Plan.
- Programme of elected Councillor and Officer training and development.
- Workforce Plan 2017-22.
- Schemes of Delegation.
- Procedure Rules.

**Supporting Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.**

It is a fundamental requirement for the Council's governance structures to support robust financial and performance management arrangements, thereby enabling efficient and effective service planning and delivery and the achievement of intended outcomes. Risk management and robust internal control are integral parts of these arrangements. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will drive financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is 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 delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from the Council's leaders and senior managers.

**Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- ~~Corporate and Service Self Evaluation process.~~
- Risk Management Strategy.
- Service Delivery Planning.
- Quarterly Performance Report (including Risk Register up dates).
- Corporate Performance Report (i.e. year-end annual report).
- Governance and Audit Committee.
- ~~and an~~ Internal Audit function.
- Information Management Plan (including General Data Protection Regulation).
- Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and Contract and Financial Procedure Rules.
- Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice.

**Supporting Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.**

Accountability within RCT is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them, with external and internal audit being integral parts of the arrangements.

**Examples of key systems, processes and documents in place within the Council**

- Reporting protocols and calendars (including forward looking work programmes, for example, for Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees).
- Statement of Accounts.
- Annual Governance Statement.
- Production of Annual Reports on key areas of business e.g. Corporate Parenting, Annual Equality Report.
- Internal Audit external assessment and Charter.
- Pension Fund Committee.



**5. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS**

- 5.1 The Council is required to conduct an assessment of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness at Rhondda Cynon Taf is led by the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director - Director of Finance, ~~and~~ Digital and Frontline Services.
  
- 5.2 The exercise involves a continued review of the activities in place around the Council's main governance arrangements, discussing and challenging the governance arrangements with senior officers across services and taking account of the findings from the Council's self-corporate assessment findings and any external inspections that take place. The outcome of the review of effectiveness is reported in the Annual Governance Statement, prepared each year.
  
- 5.3 The draft Annual Governance Statement is reviewed and challenged by the Council's Senior Leadership Team and then presented to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee for review, challenge and approval. A copy of the Council's Annual Governance Statement is available on the Council website.

\*\*\*\*\*