
Local Code of Corporate Governance

June 2025



Elmbridge
Borough Council

Contents

Introduction	3
What is good governance?	3
Core principles of good governance	4
Seven principles.....	5
Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.....	6
Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	8
Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.....	10
Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	12
Principle E: Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	14
Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	16
Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability	19

Introduction

The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance is based upon the CIPFA / SOLACE publication entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016 Edition." And the "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework Addendum, covering the annual review of governance and the annual governance statement May 2025" (the Framework). This framework emphasises the importance of considering the longer term and the links between governance and public financial management.

This document sets out the framework within which the Council conducts its business and affairs.

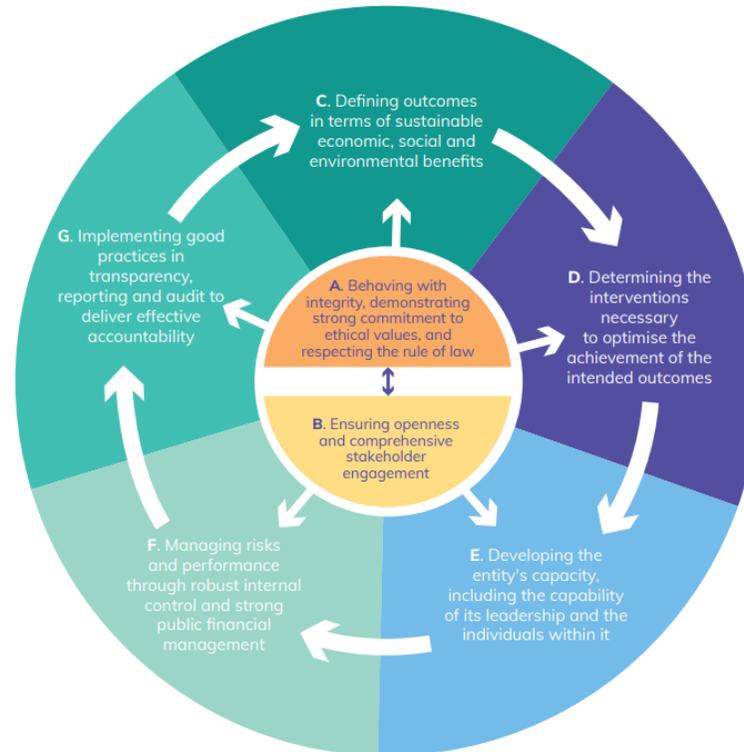
What is good governance?

Good governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. A Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance is: "The system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities"

The Council recognises that effective local government relies upon establishing and maintaining the confidence of the public in both the elected members and officers of the Council and recognises that the setting of high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead to both our existing and potential partners, and therefore provides the basis of effective community governance.

Core principles of good governance

There are seven principles of good governance as set out in the framework which are:



Seven principles

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- Developing the entity's 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 practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Set out below is how the Council fulfils those seven principles. Each principle is broken down into actions and behaviors taken by the Council in relation to the principle and the associated sub-principles.

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Arrangements to ensure ethical conduct for both members and officers, including codes of conduct, management of conflicts of interest, declarations of gift and hospitality, training and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Code of Conduct and Officer Code of Conduct in the Constitution. • Councillor induction training and update training provided on the code of conduct and social media • Officer/Councillor protocol in the constitution • Annual reminder to all officers to return declarations of interest and gifts and hospitality forms • Regular reminders (at least annually) to councillors to ensure register of interests are up to date • Monitoring Officer undertakes evaluation of councillor training needs and provides additional training where required.
Arrangements covering the ethical behaviour of external service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts include relevant provisions regarding anti-bribery • Social value requirements included in tender processes • Sustainable procurement policy in place • Safeguarding provisions are included in all relevant contracts.

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Arrangements to support whistleblowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential reporting code available on the Council's website • Whistleblowing procedures in place
How compliance with laws and regulations and internal policies and procedures is ensured and arrangements to ensure expenditure is lawful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of delegations to officers • Contract Standing Orders • Financial Procedure Rules • Budget & Policy Framework • Legal, financial & risk implications considered in each report to Committees/Cabinet and Council.
How breaches of ethical arrangements, laws, regulations and procedures are addressed and learning adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal (Monitoring) Officer Role • Internal Audit • External Audit • Overview and Scrutiny arrangements • Corporate Complaints procedure • Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy • Information Governance Officer
How all those in governance roles and senior managers demonstrate their leadership of an ethical culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's holds the values: Care, Collaborate and Continuous Improve which are embedded in the organisation. • Training provided on governance arrangements and decision making • Statutory Officer meetings and Statutory Officer sitting on Council Management Board

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
How the authority ensures that decisions are made in the public interest and the rationale for decisions is recorded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer reports to Committees/Cabinet and Council are published in accordance with the Access to Information rules in the Council's constitution which are in line with access to information legislation. • Minutes of Committees/Cabinet and Council meetings are published in accordance with the Access to Information rules in the Council's constitution which are in line with access to information legislation. • Legal, financial and risks are considered in each report to Committees/Cabinet and Council.
How the authority achieves expected standards of openness and transparency, including a culture of internal challenge and self-assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting through Council Management Board, Cabinet and Council • Overview & Scrutiny Committee • Information published in accordance with access to information legislation • Transparency data available on the Council's website

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
The arrangements for consultation and engagement with citizens, service users and stakeholders and how these inform decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement Strategy in place for cross – council consultation and engagement • Engagement platform in place - https://shaping-elmbridge.commonplace.is/
The ways in which the authority communicates with the community and stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored approach depending on the needs and requirements. • Website maintained with up to date news and information • Social media used to communicate more widely to the community • Direct communications – e- newsletters, online accounts used • Partnerships in place with key stakeholders • Face to face events as required

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
How the authority establishes its vision, target outcomes, and associated long-term plans to deliver sustainable outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and priorities in place, reviewed on an annual basis and signed off by councillors.
Its decision-making arrangements and how it ensures consideration and demonstration of value for money and best value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer reports to Committees/Cabinet and Council are published in accordance with the Access to Information rules in the Council's constitution which are in line with access to information legislation. • Minutes of Committees/Cabinet and Council meetings are published in accordance with the Access to Information rules in the Council's constitution which are in line with access to information legislation. • Legal, financial and risks are considered in each report to Committees/Cabinet and Council.
Arrangements to achieve fair access to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken in service design and on service changes.

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
The authority's strategic approach to commissioning across the entity and its partnerships and collaborations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procurement Strategy• Contract Standing Orders

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
The arrangements for medium and short-term service planning, supported by projects and programmes, to ensure alignment to the vision and objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Delivery Plans (SDPs) in place for service areas, linked to the Vision and the deliverables. • Progress on achieving the Vision is reported quarterly through Council Management Board, Cabinet and Council and scrutinised through Performance and Finance Standing Panel
How budgets and resource strategies align to the delivery of objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Capital Strategy
How the authority uses self-assessment and continuous improvement to achieve value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Strategy • Contract Standing Orders
The authority's performance management arrangements to ensure continued alignment to its objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDPs in place for service areas, linked to the Vision and the deliverables. • Progress on achieving the Vision is reported quarterly through Council Management Board, Cabinet and Council and scrutinised through Performance and Finance Standing Pane

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Arrangements for the achievement of social value in commissioning, procurement and contracting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procurement Strategy• Contract Standing Orders

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Member and officer protocols and clarity over roles and responsibilities, including schemes of delegation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor and Officer Protocol • Councillor Code of Conduct • Officer Code of Conduct
Application of the Code of Practice on Good Governance for Local Authority Statutory Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Officers meetings held (with Internal Audit representation when required) • Statutory Officers all sit on the Councils Management Board • Code of Good Practice Review by Statutory Officers
How financial management roles align with: – CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) – CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2015).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 151 Officer appointed • Deputy Section 151 Officer appointed • In-house finance team with appropriate skills and resources
The arrangements in place for the discharge of the monitoring officer function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Officer appointed • Deputy Monitoring Officer appointed

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
The arrangements in place for the discharge of the head of paid service function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Paid Service – Chief Executive appointed
Induction and development programmes to meet the needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full induction programme for Councillors • Annual Councillor development programme provided • Learning & Development programme and People Strategy in place • Leadership Team meetings held monthly and additional Managers Conferences held
Workforce planning and organisational development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Strategy in place which covers key work force planning and Organisational Development work.
Arrangements for learning and development, and health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporately managed for the organisation • Annually reported to Council Management Board • Regular offer in place with key information available through Induction, one to ones and the intranet. • Annual plan for Learning & Development and Health & Wellbeing programmes • Employee engagement undertaken to sense check offer

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Risk management policy, strategy and arrangements for review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Framework reviewed by Audit Committee, approved by Cabinet & Council
How financial management arrangements align with the Financial Management Code.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned review in 2027
Internal control arrangements including: – Cyber, AI and information security arrangements – information governance – asset management – procurement and contract management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit provides assessment of internal control environment • Audit activity informed by assessment of risk and in consultation with leadership team and other stakeholders • Annual Internal Audit plan includes; IT, InfoGov, Procurement and Contracts • Senior Information Risk Owner in place • Information Governance Group
Assurance frameworks across the three lines. The framework should set out how the leadership team obtains its assurance, including from management, risk and compliance arrangements, and internal audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance Mapping is undertaken annually and incorporated into the audit planning process • Three lines of defence mapped for the strategic risk register

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Internal audit arrangements in conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK public sector(GIAS and the Application Note) and the CIPFA Code of Practice on the Governance of Internal Audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Internal Audit Effectiveness Review • Internal Audit External Assessment undertaken in 2023 and confirmed general conformance • CIPFA Code of Practice being reviewed in collaboration with ORBIS Internal Audit (the Councils Internal Audit providers) colleagues
Arrangements for formal overview and scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview & Scrutiny Committee • Performance and Finance Standing Panel • Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme including task and finish groups being set up as required
Facilitation of internal and external challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview & Scrutiny Committee • Performance and Finance Standing Panel • Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme including task and finish groups being set up as required
Undertaking the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (CIPFA, 2022).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee Terms of Reference follows CIPFA guidance • Periodic self-assessment and skills audit adapted from CIPFA Publication 'Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities'

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Counter fraud and anti-corruption developed and maintained in accordance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (CIPFA, 2014).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter Fraud arrangements conform to CIPFA Code of Practice • Counter Fraud Strategy & Framework follows Fighting Fraud & Corruption Locally (FFCL) best practice
Governance, risk and control arrangements across companies, partnerships, collaborations and arm's length bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts and agreements put in place to govern relationship • Scheme of delegation to officers

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
Arrangements for the timely response and support to the work of external audit, internal audit and other inspection or regulatory action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Internal Audit progress reports to Council Management Board • Regular Progress Reports to Audit Committee for Internal & External Audit • Internal Audit agree actions with management for audit findings – progress reported to CMB and Audit Committee
Approach to welcoming external challenge and implementing recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA Peer reviews • Annual Governance Statement
How learning and improvement are actioned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Governance Statement • Review of constitution undertaken by Constitution Review Working Group as required
How transparency and accountability are maintained across collaborations and arm's length bodies, such as trading companies and joint ventures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts and agreements put in place to govern relationship
Accountability to the public and stakeholders is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Governance Statement

Sub-principle	Behaviour/action
supported by clear assurance and ensures core areas are covered to enable better accountability in practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Assurance Statements provided by all Heads of Service and Council Management Board