

TITLE OF REPORT: Local Code of Governance

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of the Report

1. This report asks the Audit and Standards Committee to consider and approve an updated version of the Local Code of Governance.

Background

2. Good governance in local authorities is about the systems, processes and values by which Councils operate and by which they engage with, and are held accountable to, their communities and stakeholders. Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and ultimately good outcomes for those who live, work in or visit the Borough.
3. The Council is committed to achieving effective corporate governance and since 2007 has adopted a Local Code of Governance which establishes how good governance will be achieved within the organisation.
4. The Council's code follows the principles of good governance set out in guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' framework they issued in 2016. These principles are:
 - 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; and
 - implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

5. The Council has a robust governance framework by which it implements and embeds these principles in all aspects of the Council's conduct and operation, and which is set out in high level terms in the table at Appendix 1 to this report.
6. The Council's alignment with the CIPFA / SOLACE principles is reviewed each year within the Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement assesses the Council's compliance, and outlines any improvement actions to be taken as a result of the assessment.

Proposal

7. As part of the annual review of the Local Code of Governance, the Council's senior management have been consulted on any necessary amendments or additions to the document. The proposed changes are highlighted in Appendix 1.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that the Audit & Standards Committee approves the updated Local Code of Governance attached at Appendix 1.