

Belfast City Council Code of Governance

Introduction

Governance is about how Belfast City Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

It comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads its community.

The CIPFA Solace 'Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework' was published in July 2007 and represents best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and making adopted practice open and explicit.

Belfast City Council is committed to the principles of good governance and this Local Code of Governance is a public statement of that commitment.

The Audit Panel approved this Code on **DATE**

The 6 Principles of Good Governance

Belfast City Council is committed to the core and supporting principles of good governance set out within the CIPFA Solace Framework, namely that good governance means:

1. Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
3. Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
4. Taking informed transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
5. Developing the capacity and capability of members to be effective and ensuring that officers – including the statutory officers - also have the capability and capacity to deliver effectively.
6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust local public accountability.

Compliance with the Code

Our Local Code of Governance is supported by systems, processes and documents that determine and control the way in which the Council manages its affairs.

Appendix A demonstrates how the Council currently complies with the Code, in addition to detailing the tasks, projects and initiatives within the corporate Value Creation Map that will further enhance the governance arrangements within the Council.

Monitoring and Review

Using the Corporate Plan Portfolio where appropriate, we have identified the individual or committee responsible for monitoring and reviewing each system, process and document that underpins our governance arrangements.

The Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services will undertake at least annual reviews of the Councils governance arrangements to ensure that governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively in practice.

The results of these reviews will be reported to the Audit Panel and will inform the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement¹ which forms part of the published financial statements.

Policy Owner: Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services

Version Number	Date of Issue	Issued by	Issued to
1	28.08.07	Corporate Risk and Governance Manager	COMT
2	19.03.08	Corporate Risk and Governance Manager	Assurance Board

¹ Local Government (Accounts and Audit) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Appendix A: Compliance with the Belfast City Council Code of Good Governance

No.	Supporting Principle	Systems, Processes and Documents that Provide Evidence of Compliance	Individuals and Committees Responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing the Identified Systems, Processes and Documents	Planned Improvement Actions (Corporate Value Creation Map)	Individuals Responsible for Undertaking the Actions Required (as per Corporate Plan Portfolio)
1	Core principle: Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.				
1.1	Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value Creation Map (VCM) and corporate plan ▪ Taking an active role in RPA ▪ One Council corporate communication guidelines ▪ www.belfastcity.gov.uk and City Matters magazine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT ▪ Strategic Planning and Policy Officer ▪ Head of Corporate Communications ▪ Head of Corporate Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a new Corporate Plan and define links to the Community Plan and to the Council's Business Plans through the development of a new planning framework which includes area based planning. ▪ Cascade VCM to all Services ▪ Implement internal communications plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager, the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager and the SNAP Manager ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Director of Improvement
1.2	Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership or by commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VCM key performance questions and indicators ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collate and analyse and report on VCM performance indicators ▪ Develop an automated PMS to assist in the collation of indicators across the council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Director of Improvement

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		<p>performance management system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is underway to develop corporate and service standards ▪ DOE Best Value indicators ▪ Corporate complaints system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Business Support Manager, Chief Executive's Dept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carry out performance reviews (collection, analysis, decision) ▪ Develop IPM for COMT / Directors / Heads of Service / Senior Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Human Resources and Core Improvement Team
1.3	Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic financial management framework ▪ Council Improvement Agenda ▪ Efficiency programme ▪ VFM programme of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team and AGRS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement a Financial Strategy ▪ Refine the rolling medium term financial plan ▪ Implement the agreed efficiency programme ▪ Apply gateway process to all projects included within the capital programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of a rolling medium-term financial plan ▪ Capital programme ▪ Gateway process ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system ▪ LGA review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services and Core Improvement Team ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Local Government Auditor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the Better Business project ▪ Develop and implement an Asset Management Plan ▪ Development of the City Investment Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of ISB ▪ Director of Improvement ▪ Director of Corporate Services and Director of Improvement

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2	Core principle: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles				
2.1	Ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New political governance structures ▪ Council Standing Orders ▪ Scheme of Delegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Director of Legal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop guidance for officers on how to implement the Scheme of Delegation, e.g. guidance on procurement, recruitment etc. In addition, develop a process for regular reporting on the implementation of the Scheme of Delegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Legal Services leading a team to take this forward
2.2	Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scheme of Delegation ▪ Committee reporting protocol ▪ Party Group Briefing Days to facilitate and coordinate contact with officers ▪ Terms and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Legal Services ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services and Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Human 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council ▪ Implement the member development programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services

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		<p>conditions of employment and job descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members remuneration ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services and Core Improvement Team ▪ Core Improvement Team 		
2.3	<p>Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing consultation processes ▪ Development of the local code of governance for BCC ▪ Work is underway to develop corporate and service standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Audit Governance and Risk Services ▪ Improvement Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Director of Improvement

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3	Core principle: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour				
3.1	Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The NI Code of Local Government Conduct for Members ▪ Code of Conduct for BCC Officers ▪ Policy and Guidance on the Acceptance and Provision of Gifts and Hospitality ▪ Policy and Guidance on Potential Conflict of Interest Situations Encountered by Council Officers ▪ Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement ▪ Whistleblowing Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager

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3.2	Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value Creation Map ▪ Equality Reference Guide has been developed by the Council ▪ Sustainable Development plan (supported by Energy Conservation Strategy and In-house Waste Strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Equality Officer ▪ Sustainable Development Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a set of corporate values for the Council ▪ Incorporate the agreed corporate values into the senior management appraisal system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COMT supported by the Core Improvement Manager and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Head of Human Resources

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4	Core principle: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk				
4.1	Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New political governance structures ▪ Committee reporting system ▪ Council minutes system on www.belfastcity.gov.uk ▪ Audit Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services ▪ Principal Committee Administrator ▪ Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement Modern.Gov minutes system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principal Committee Administrator
4.2	Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system ▪ Committee reporting system ▪ Ongoing consultation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a scoping paper on the development of an Information Management Strategy ▪ Develop and implement an Information Systems Strategy which will include the requirements of Information Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of ISB ▪ Head of ISB

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is underway to develop corporate and service standards ▪ Complaints system ▪ Professional advice sought when required ▪ Ongoing development and use of Citistats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Business Support Manager, Chief Executives Department ▪ COMT ▪ Director of Development 		
4.3	Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk management strategy ▪ Annual Governance Statement ▪ Business continuity management policy ▪ Whistleblowing Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Corporate Risk and Governance Manager ▪ Director of Corporate Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitating the embedding of risk management into the day to day processes of the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit Governance and Risk Services

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4.4	Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standing Orders ▪ Scheme of Delegation ▪ Financial Regulations ▪ Legal Services Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Director of Legal Services ▪ Director of Corporate Services ▪ Director of Legal Services 	No further actions identified.	N/a

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5	Core principle: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective				
5.1	Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Induction sessions for Members ▪ Corporate induction programmes for officers ▪ Code of procedures on recruitment and selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Head of Human Resources 	No further actions identified.	N/a
5.2	Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member development programme ▪ Personal development planning ▪ Work is underway to develop a strategic performance management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a workforce development plan for the organisation ▪ Implement the member development programme ▪ Put in place a corporate approach to Personal Development Plans for Members and Officers ▪ Develop IPM for COMT / Directors / Heads of Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of HR ▪ Head of Committee and Members Services ▪ Head of HR ▪ Core Improvement Team and Head of Human Resources

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5.3	Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing consultation processes ▪ Recruitment of independent person to sit on the Audit Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Improvement Team ▪ Head of Audit Governance and Risk Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Improvement

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6 Core principle: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability					
6.1	Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embryonic community planning board ▪ Ongoing consultation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of improvement and the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish current status through an overall Stakeholder Audit ▪ Develop an External Relations Strategy ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improvement Manager ▪ Strategic Planning and Policy Manager ▪ Director of Improvement
6.2	Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belnet and City Matters magazine ▪ Complaints handling system ▪ Council meetings open to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Corporate Communications ▪ Business Support Manager, Chief Executive's Dept. ▪ Head of Committee and Member Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise systems for community engagement and consultation ▪ Develop and implement a new Corporate Plan and define links to the Community Plan and to the Council's Business Plans through the development of a new planning framework which includes area based planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director of Improvement ▪ Improvement Manager, the Strategic Planning and Policy Manager and the SNAP Manager

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6.3	Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Terms and conditions of employment ▪ Ongoing consultation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Core Improvement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement Single Status arrangements ▪ Implement internal communications plan ▪ Create a Workforce Development Plan ▪ Put in place PDPs for Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Director of Improvement ▪ Head of Human Resources ▪ Head of Human Resources