LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE

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Finance

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Document Control

Policy title	Local Code of Governance
Policy owner	Head of Audit & Management Assurance
Effective from date	1st April 2019 (Original BCP Council Local Code of Governance, thereafter subject to annual evolution)
Current version	V2.7
Approval body	Audit & Governance Committee
Approval date	25th July 2024
Review frequency	Annually
Next review due	April 2025

Revision History

Date	Version	Significant Changes
February 2019	v1	New BCP Council Policy created
October 2019	V2.2	Update to reflect the rapid changes in the new BCP Council and add in Section 6
November 2020	V2.3	Update to reflect ongoing changes in BCP Council governance framework
June 2021	V2.4	Update to reflect ongoing changes in BCP Council governance framework; Three Lines Model updated in line with best practice
July 2022	V2.5	Update to reference new policies implemented in 2021/22, including the Talent and Performance Enablement Policy
June 2023	V2.6	Minor updates – inclusion of Nolan Principles, Transparency Code & FOI/SARs, further details for a number of areas, deletion of reference to Big Plan & Smarter Structures
June 2024	V2.7	Minor updates – removal of now defunct policies and strategies to ensure evidence base remains relevant.

Minor Amendments and Editing Log

The Head of Audit & Management Assurance has primary responsibility for maintaining the Local Code of Governance. It is recognised there may be a need to clarify or update certain elements of the Local Code of Governance from time to time; this may require minor amendments or editing. Minor amendments and editing changes will be made by the Head of Audit & Management Assurance, and these will be logged in the table below. The Local Code of Governance is presented to Audit & Governance Committee annually.

Date	Description of amendments or editing	Page
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Equalities Impact Assessment

Assessment date – June 2024	No equality implications have been identified from a review of the changes made as part of the annual refresh of the Local Code of Governance (LCoG). Any changes to the policies signposted within the LCoG will be reviewed through their own individual EIAs.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Local Code of Governance demonstrates BCP Council's commitment to the highest standards of corporate governance. The Local Code sets out its governance arrangements in relation to the seven best practice principles in the CIPFA/IFAC 'International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector' (see Section 4) and as required by the CIFPA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework.

2. What is Corporate Governance?

2.1 Corporate governance comprises of the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for service users and stakeholders are defined and achieved, while acting in the public interest at all times. It is about doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, transparent, honest and accountable manner.

3. Responsibilities for Corporate Governance

3.1 All councillors and officers have a responsibility for upholding the principles of good governance. It is a key responsibility for the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

3.2 The Statutory Officers Group, comprising of the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Executive are responsible for the development, delivery and review of robust corporate governance arrangements.

3.3 The Audit & Governance Committee has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

3.4 The Chief Auditor produces an Annual Report to Audit & Governance Committee on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's systems of internal control.

3.5 The Annual Governance Statement is produced following a review of the effectiveness of the Council's corporate governance arrangements, as outlined in this Code. Any significant governance weaknesses are highlighted, and an action plan produced to address these issues, and monitored by the Audit & Governance Committee.

4 The Governance Framework

4.1 The diagram below, taken from the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector, illustrates the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other.

"Achieving the Intended Outcomes while acting in the Public Interest at all times"
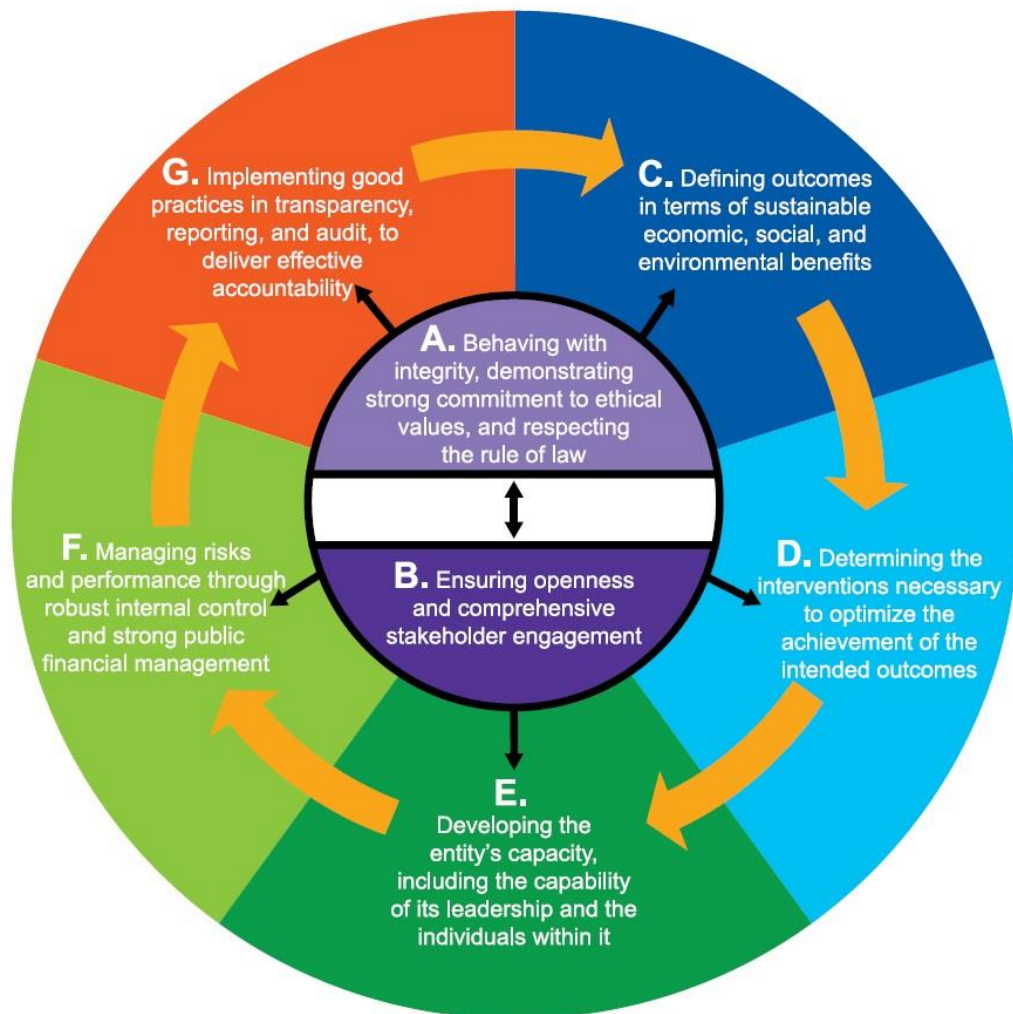
4.2 BCP Council's Local Code of Governance is based on this framework, and the table in section 5 demonstrates the Council's governance arrangements in relation to it.

5 How BCP meets the Principles of Good Governance

Principles of Good Governance	How we meet these Principles
(A) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	The Constitution (which is reviewed by the Constitution Review Working Group with any changes approved by Full Council)
	Member Code of Conduct
	Member-Member, and Member-Officer Protocols
	Decision making process for Committees and Members
	Committee forward plans, agendas, reports (including legal, financial, equalities and risk impact) and minutes (showing decisions taken and declaration of interests)
	Full Council and Cabinet
	Standards Committee
	Audit & Governance Committee
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s
	Member Registers of Interests and Registers of Gifts and Hospitality
	Member induction programmes and training plans
	Financial Regulations
	Statutory officers (including Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer) fulfil duties in line with regulatory requirements, and who meet as the Statutory Officers Group
	Officer Code of Conduct
	Officer induction programmes
	Behavioural Framework
	Nolan Principles
	Mandatory training and learning including data protection, cyber, equality diversity & inclusion, fraud awareness, understanding of safeguarding
	Officer Declaration of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Policy
	Scheme of Delegations to Officers
	Decision making process for Officers
	Record of Officer decisions
	Record of Chief Executive's Delegated Authority decisions
	Talent and Performance Enablement Policy and Reviews
	Corporate Complaints Procedure
	Equality and Diversity Policy and Governance Framework
	Recruitment and Selection Policy
	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

	Whistleblowing Policy
	Compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption
	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy and compliance
	Contractual arrangements
	Partnership Registers / Partnership Agreements
	Corporate Values
	Staff Surveys
	Local Plan / Local Development Scheme
	Council People and Culture Strategy
	Council Operating Model
	Agreements with subsidiaries, partners, and external providers

(B) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Multi-channel public communications, including: email newsletters, BCP website, magazines, Facebook and Twitter
	Proactive publication and reporting
	Local Government Transparency Code 2015
	Responses to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests
	Online Council Tax information
	Corporate Strategy & Delivery Plan
	Decision making process for Committees and Members
	Committee forward plans, agendas, reports (including legal, financial, equalities and risk impact) and minutes (showing decisions taken and declaration of interests)
	Record of Officer decisions
	Record of Chief Executive's Delegated Authority decisions
	Corporate Complaints Procedure
	Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure
	Public/residential surveys, including online
	Key national and local data
	Consultation Planning and Guidance
	- Public and officer consultations - Staff surveys - Local Forums
	Internal Communications
	Media Relations Protocol
	Branding Guidelines
	Social Media Guidance
	Partnership Registers / Partnership Agreements
	Neighbourhood Plans
	Statement of Community Involvement

(C) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits	Corporate Strategy & Delivery Plan
	Medium Term Financial Plan process
	Performance Monitoring Framework
	- Service business and action plans - Service performance monitoring - Corporate performance monitoring
	Consultation Planning and Guidance
	- Public and officer consultations - Staff surveys - Local Forums
	Risk Management Framework
	Capital Investment Strategy (Non-Treasury) 2020-2025
	Decision making process for Committees and Members
	Committee forward plans, agendas, reports (including legal, financial, equalities and risk impact) and minutes (showing decisions taken and declaration of interests)
	Record of Officer decisions
	Record of Chief Executive's Delegated Authority decisions
	Equality and Diversity Policy and Governance Framework
	Corporate Management Board
	Directors Strategy Group
	Capital Investment Programme Board
	Corporate Property Group
	Transformation Board
	Local Plan
	Contractual arrangements
	Partnership Registers / Partnership Agreements

(D) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Decision making process for Committees and Members
	Committee forward plans, agendas, reports (including legal, financial, equalities and risk impact) and minutes (showing decisions taken and declaration of interests)
	Record of Officer decisions
	Record of Chief Executive's Delegated Authority decisions
	Performance Monitoring Framework - Service business and action plans - Service performance monitoring - Corporate performance monitoring
	Medium Term Financial Plan process
	Risk Management Framework
	Corporate Strategy & Delivery Plans
	Benchmarking and research
	Capital Investment Strategy (Non-Treasury) 2020-2025
	Youth Justice Plan
	Council Safeguarding Strategy
	Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership
	Transformation Board
	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Panels and EIA processes
	Corporate Parenting Board
	Health & Wellbeing Board

| (E) Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Performance Monitoring Framework
	- Service business and action plans - Service performance monitoring - Corporate performance monitoring
	Benchmarking and research
	People Strategy
	Job descriptions for all employees
	Roles of Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members and all other Members and Committees defined
	Roles of statutory officers (Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer) and other senior officers defined
	Member-Member, and Member-Officer Protocols
	Scheme of Delegations to Officers
	The Constitution
	Member induction programmes and training plans
	Officer induction programmes
	Mandatory training and learning including data protection, cyber, equality diversity & inclusion, fraud awareness, understanding of safeguarding
	Talent and Performance Enablement Policy and Reviews
	Standards Committee
	Councillor Development Framework
	Public/residential surveys, including online
	Key national data. e.g. Key Facts 2023
	Consultation Planning and Guidance
	- Public and officer consultations - Staff surveys - Local Forums
	Corporate and HR policies and procedures, including those to support health and wellbeing
	ICT guidance and processes
	Peer Reviews and Inspections
	Pay and Reward including Terms and Conditions
	Workforce Strategy for Children's Services

(F) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Risk Management Framework
	Performance Monitoring Framework
	- Service business and action plans - Service performance monitoring - Corporate performance monitoring
	Corporate Complaints Procedure
	Benchmarking and research
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee/s
	Internal Audit Charter operating to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)
	Risk-Based Annual Audit Plan and Key Assurance Work
	Chief Auditors Annual Report
	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
	Whistleblowing Policy
	Compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption
	Annual Governance Statement
	Audit & Governance Committee
	Information Governance Accountability Framework
	Medium Term Financial Plan process
	Financial Regulations
	Regular scrutiny of financial monitoring reports by Councillors and Officers
	Corporate Strategy & Delivery Plan
	Treasury Management Strategy
	Decision making process for Committees and Members
	Committee forward plans, agendas, reports (including legal, financial, equalities and risk impact) and minutes (showing decisions taken and declaration of interests)
	Record of Officer decisions
	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Panels and EIA processes
	Record of Chief Executive's Delegated Authority decisions
	Corporate and HR policies and procedures
	Health & Safety Policy / Fire Safety Policy and associated governance (including H&S Board, Safety Supporters Forum and Service and Team based meetings
	Emergency planning and resilience arrangements (corporate)
	Compliance with the Statement of the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government

(G) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability	Multi-channel public communications, including: email newsletters, BCP website, magazines, Facebook and Twitter
	Proactive publication and reporting
	Local Government Transparency Code 2015
	Responses to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests
	Annual Financial Statements
	External audit reports: Audit Findings Report, Annual Audit Letter and Certification Report
	External reviews, including Ofsted and Peer Reviews
	Annual Governance Statement
	Internal Audit Function operating to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)
	Risk-Based Annual Audit Plan and Key Assurance Work
	Internal Audit recommendation implementation reported to Audit & Governance Committee
	Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit
	Partnership Registers / Partnership Agreements

6 How BCP ensures Good Governance is delivered in practice

6.1 The Three Lines model is widely recognised across both the public and private sectors as a best practice approach to implementing effective risk management and corporate governance. It is designed to provide organisations with resilience in these areas, with each Line complementing the others, as summarised below:
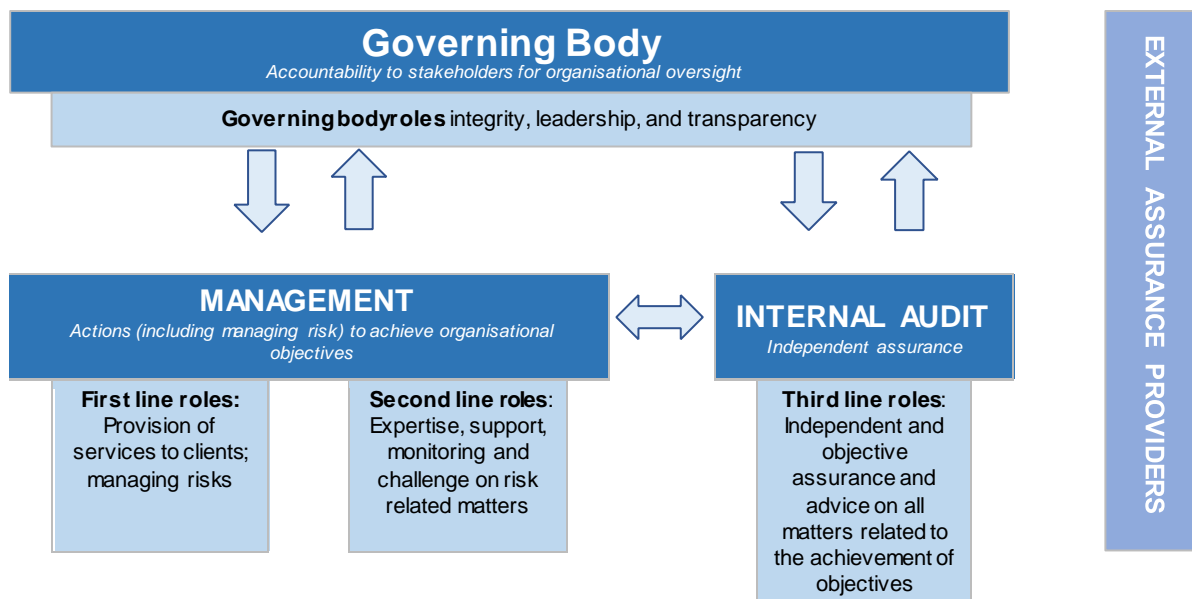
First Line: The First Line is responsible for the implementation of risk management and governance processes within the organisation. In BCP this is the responsibility of Management of all levels across all Services in the organisation.

Second Line: The Second Line is responsible for the provision of advice, guidance and policy in support of risk management and governance processes. This Line is also responsible for monitoring compliance with risk and governance requirements by services in the First Line. Typically, this role is fulfilled by corporate functions with defined governance and policy remits, for example:
- Emergency Planning
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Information Governance
- Procurement
- Risk Management

Where there is no clear corporate function with responsibility for compliance, Corporate Management Board will pragmatically determine the need for this and who will act as the Second Line in a proportionate response to the scope and remit of the function.

Third Line: The Third Line is responsible for providing independent assurance to Senior Management and Members on the effectiveness of the first two lines. In BCP this is the responsibility of the Internal Audit Service.