

# Mid Ulster District Council

## CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### Introduction

Corporate governance comprises the systems and values by which organisations are directed and controlled and through which they are accountable to and engage with their communities.

To demonstrate compliance with the principles of good corporate governance, Mid Ulster District Council must ensure that it does the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

### “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2007)”

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) have published a framework and guidance notes entitled, “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*” (the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework”). This provides guidance to local authorities on how to establish a locally adopted code of corporate governance.

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to applying the six core principles of good governance set out in the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework of:

- Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
- Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.
- Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

### **What is the purpose of this Code of Corporate Governance?**

Good governance is crucial as it leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and ultimately good outcomes for citizens and service users. Further, good governance enables an authority to pursue its aims effectively whilst controlling and managing risk.

Mid Ulster District Council has a robust Constitution and other good governance documents and arrangements in place. Together, these documents and arrangements demonstrate that the Council is seeking to ensure that it is governed well through the integration into its conduct of the core principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework.

The purpose of this Code of Corporate Governance is therefore to provide a simple document with hyperlinks to relevant documents relating to governance which are available free of charge on the Council's website.

<b>PRINCIPLE 1: Focusing on the purpose of the authority and the outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.</b>	
<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
1. Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Council's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan 2015-2019</li> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Code of Governance</li> </ul>
2. Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Management (PM) Framework               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Service Improvement Plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Complaints Policy</li> <li>• Surveys, feedback.</li> </ul>
3. Ensuring that the Council makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Budget</li> <li>• Annual Governance Statement</li> <li>• Annual Audit and Management Letter</li> <li>• Procurement policy</li> <li>• Internal &amp; External Audit consider VFM.</li> </ul>

<b>PRINCIPLE 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.</b>	
<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
1. Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Council 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"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Organisation Structure</li> <li>• Contracts and job descriptions</li> </ul>
2. Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between Council Members and officers and that the responsibilities of Members and officers are carried out to a high standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution – sub committees, working groups etc.</li> <li>• Members' Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Employees' Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Annual Report of the Audit Committee</li> <li>• Annual review of effectiveness of Internal Audit</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review of effectiveness of Internal Controls</li> <li>• Annual Governance Statement</li> </ul>
3. Ensuring relationships between the Council, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Employees &amp; Members Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Media Procedure / Communication Strategy</li> <li>• Complaints procedure</li> </ul>

**PRINCIPLE 3: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.**

<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
1. Ensuring Council Members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members' Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Employees' Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Gifts and Hospitality Policy</li> <li>• Register of Members' Interests</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy</li> <li>• Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</li> <li>• Constitution</li> </ul>
2. Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Performance Management Framework</li> </ul>

**PRINCIPLE 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.**

<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
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"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Freedom of Information</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Complaints Procedure</li> </ul>
2. Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants or needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Reporting to Committee</li> </ul>
3. Ensuring that an effective risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management Strategy</li> </ul>

management system is in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit on Risk Management</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Annual Audit and Inspection Letter</li> <li>• Annual Internal Audit Assurance</li> </ul>
4. Using the Council's legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution</li> <li>• Solicitor</li> </ul>

<b>PRINCIPLE 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.</b>	
<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
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"> <li>• Training programme for Employees</li> <li>• Training needs assessment survey planned for 2017/18 in line with the Elected Members Development Charter.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Performance Management Framework</li> <li>• Councillor Personal Development</li> </ul>
3. Encouraging new talent for membership of the Council so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council left such activity to individual political parties and the Electoral Office.</li> <li>• Council does engage with communities and provides training to Members.</li> </ul>

<b>PRINCIPLE 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.</b>	
<b>Supporting Principles</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
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"> <li>• The Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> </ul>

<p>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 Council, in partnership or by commissioning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Annual Budget</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> <li>• 10 year Community Plan</li> </ul>
<p>3. Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation Development Programme</li> <li>• Performance Management</li> </ul>

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Council will monitor the arrangements set out in this Code of Corporate Governance for their effectiveness in practice and will review them on a continuing basis to ensure that they are up to date.

Each year the Council will publish an Annual Governance Statement which will explain and assess how the Council has complied with this Code of Corporate Governance and provide details of how continual improvement in the system of internal control will be achieved.

The Council's Audit Committee generally considers all processes for risk, control and governance and provides independent, effective assurance about the adequacy of the Council's governance environment.