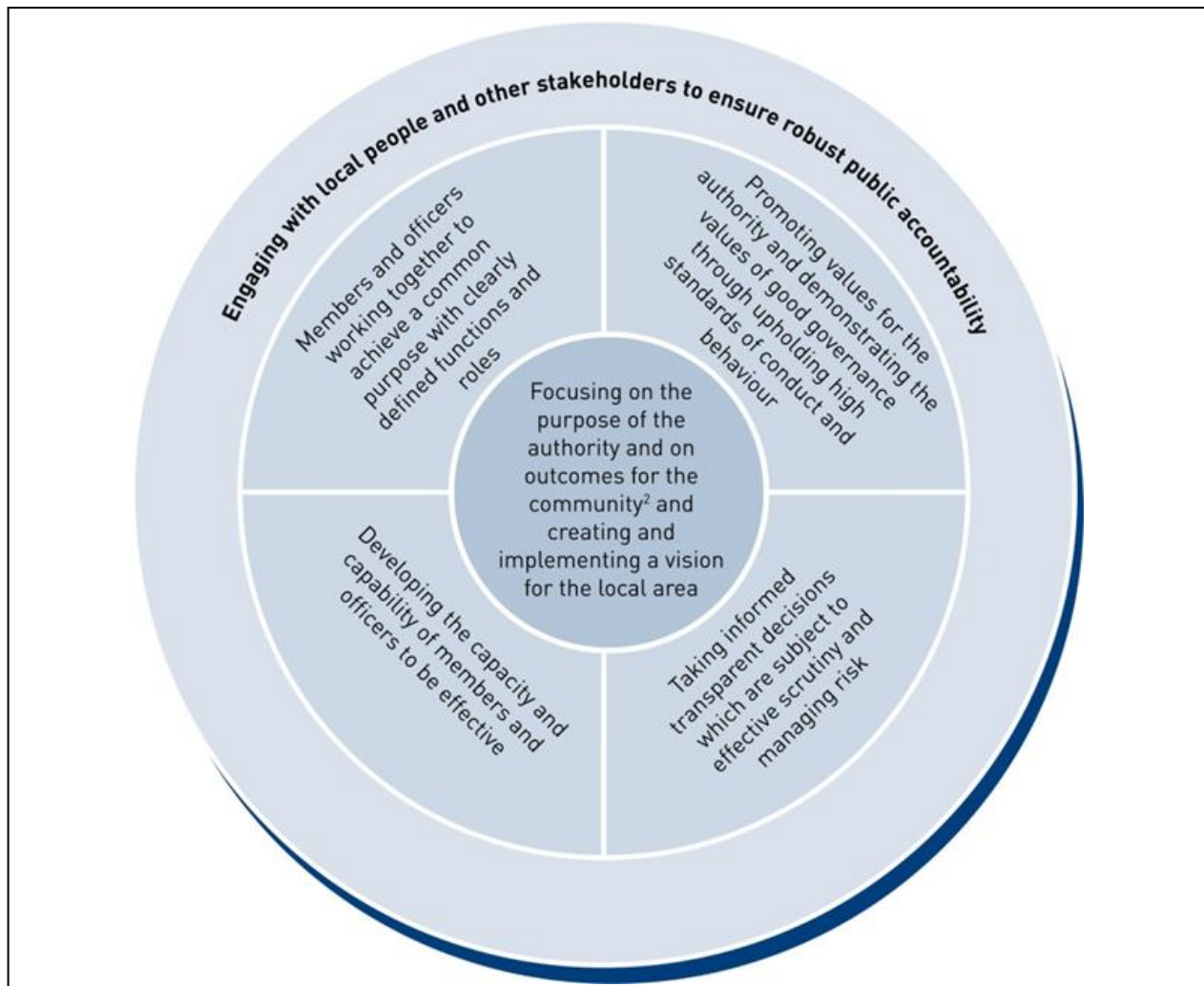


DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY Corporate Governance Policy

The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (DWFRA) is the combined fire and rescue authority for its area, as defined within sections 1 and 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This document is the Corporate Governance policy statement for the Authority. It is supported by a set of procedures.

The Authority will adopt the principles of 'The Good Governance Standard for Public Services' produced by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services. The Commission was established by the Office for Public Management (OPM) and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to develop a common code and set of principles for good governance across public services. The principles are contained in CIPFA's 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' and are shown in figure 1. These have been previously adopted by both Dorset and Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authorities.

Figure 1: The Good Governance Standard for Public Services



Corporate Governance Policy

In addition, the Authority will consider the Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Guidance on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England.'

The CIPFA/SOLACE* have defined Governance as '*how public bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, and honest and accountable manner*'. It comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values by which public bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities'.

(* Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE))

We are committed to making sure the business of the Authority and the Service is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Through this policy, the Authority will make sure good governance is embedded throughout the organisation and we will aim for continuous improvement in delivering the services we provide.

To provide assurance of this for all key stakeholders, every year the Authority will publish an Annual Governance Statement and a Statement of Assurance in accordance with legislative requirements and Government expectations.

The Governance arrangements for the Fire and Rescue Authority are contained within the Members' Handbook. The document contains specific roles and responsibilities for Statutory Officers and Members. Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority receive an induction and on-going development appropriate to their role and recognition will be given to the skills and knowledge that they bring to their position from their role on their constituent authority. A suite of Member role profiles will allow Members to understand their specific responsibilities in further detail.

Our vision, values, and behaviours are contained in an annual Community Safety Plan supported by management and resourcing arrangements scrutinised through the Initial Governance Arrangements of the Authority and through our audit programme.

Why is this policy needed?

A fundamental responsibility of a Fire and Rescue Authority is to make sure good governance is in place and we conduct our business openly and transparently.

This policy communicates to all external and internal stakeholders the importance the Authority puts on to corporate governance. It also shows how the Authority provides evidence it meets its responsibilities, complying with legal requirements and Government expectations through the production of two key documents:

1. Under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, we are required to prepare an annual governance statement in support of our statement of accounts. In doing this, we are expected to and will follow 'proper guidance' supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). According to Circular 03/2006 this proper guidance is '*the CIPFA/SOLACE framework - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*'.

Corporate Governance Policy

- Under Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Authority has to have regard to Government expectations as laid down within the Fire and Rescue National Framework (2012). The Framework sets out the requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish an Annual Statement of Assurance. The Statement of Assurance is a source of information for the Secretary of State. It also provides an easy and accessible way in which communities, government and local authorities, and partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.

How we will meet the above requirements?

The production of the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Assurance will be co-ordinated by the Brigade Manager for Corporate Services and Service Development. It is a responsibility of all Brigade Managers to make sure their teams work within the code of corporate governance and co-operate in and support the production of these two key documents.

In accordance with the DCLG's 'Guidance on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England (2013)', the Authority will ensure that an elected member has responsibility for the Statement of Assurance and is accountable for its contents and signing it off.

To support the development of the Statement of Assurance a full standard analysis will be undertaken against the governance code. In addition, an annual operational assurance will be completed and a position statement will be produced against a number of corporate quality standards to support the assessment. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and Monitoring Officer carefully review this assessment annually before it is scrutinised by the Finance and Audit Committee.

In accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), the Chief Fire Officer and the Chair of the Authority will approve an evidenced-based Annual Governance Statement for publication. The Statement of Assurance and the Annual Governance Statement will accompany the Annual Accounts in June and will be presented to the Authority for scrutiny, approval, and publication in September.

Success of the Policy – How is this Policy assured?

The policy will be assured in the following ways:

- Annually the Authority will review the effectiveness of the governance framework, including the system of internal control. The Finance and Audit Committee will complete this work and seek approval from the Authority at its September meeting.
- The Authority's auditors will carry out an independent annual review of the process for formulating the required statements.
- Quarterly the Authority will review progress on the key issues and strategic risks arising from the statements.
- Compliance with legislative and statutory regulations.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every three years or will be brought back to Members if requirements change.