

DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Corporate Governance Policy

The Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority 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; a local code of governance and a comprehensive assurance framework.

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.

The Authority will adopt the principles of 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' Framework 2016 produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)- see figure 1. This code adapts the International Framework (Good Governance in Public Sector) to develop a common code and set of principles for good governance across local government and is recommended for adoption by fire and rescue authorities.

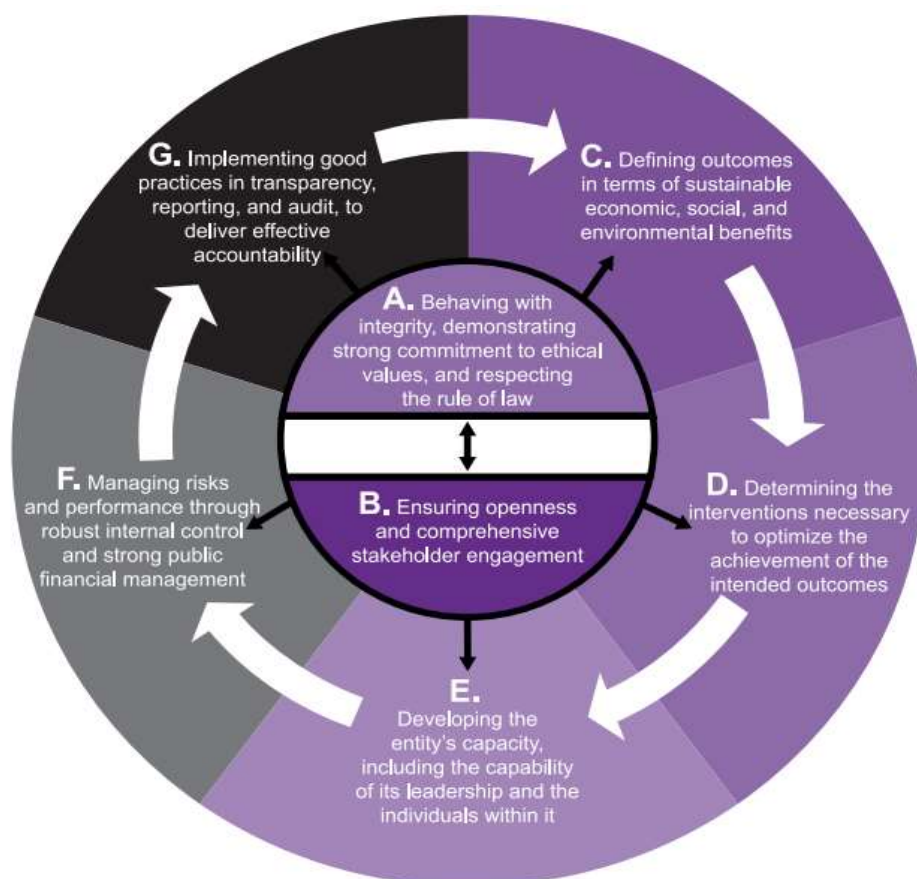


Figure 1: Core Principles of Good Governance

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.

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Part One – Purpose, Process & Outcome

The reason(s) for which something is done, created or exists; individuals involved and what we wish to achieve as an end result.

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|-----------------------------------|
| Purpose |
| 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, 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 CIFPA/SOLACE framework - Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*'.
2. 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.

Process

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 Director of Corporate Services. It is a responsibility of the Strategic Leadership Team to ensure their departments and teams work within the code of corporate governance and to co-operate in and support the production of these two key documents. The SLT and Monitoring Officer will carefully review this assessment annually before it is scrutinised by the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee.

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.

In accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations, 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 and will be presented to the Authority for scrutiny, approval, and publication.

Outcome

Success of the Policy? (How will this Policy be assured?)

The policy will be assured in the following ways:

- 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 in particular the Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Guidance on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England 2013.'
- Through the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Assurance will be assured annually by the Authority.
- The Authority's auditors will carry out an independent annual review of the process for formulating the required statements.

Part Two – Document References (includes Supporting Information), Document Management & Version Control

This Policy is linked to the following:

Document References:

Published Procedures (to be finalised)

Supporting Information:

[Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Guidance on Statement of Assurances for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England](#)

CG – Corporate Governance Policy

[The Good Governance Standard for Public Services](#)

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) published the advisory framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. It is accompanied by this briefing note: [Delivering good governance in local government briefing note](#)

Legislation References:

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England \(2012\)](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services Act \(2004\)](#)

[Local Government Act 1999](#)

[The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 - SI 234](#)

Document Management:

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

| Policy Reference: Corporate Governance (CG) | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Owner | Review Date | Author | Status |
| Chief Fire Officer | 01/06/2020 | Derek James | Published |

Version Control:

| Version | Page & Par Ref | Date | Changes Made | Authorised By |
|---------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| V2.0 | Entire Document | 27/06/2017 | Document ready for publishing | Derek James |
| V1.0 | Entire Document | 01/12/2015 | Document ready for publishing | Mark Gaskarth |

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