LP 251119

Burnley Borough Council

Local Code for Corporate Governance

1. Introduction

Corporate Governance is the system by which Local Authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. The basic principles of good Corporate Governance require the Council to carry out its functions in a way that demonstrates accountability, effectiveness, integrity, inclusivity and is up to date.

This code is a public statement of the Council's commitment to these principles and sets out the way in which it will meet that commitment. The main body of the code is divided into five sections, each of which covers a particular dimension of the Council's responsibilities for corporate governance. Under each section the means by which the Council will meet and demonstrate its commitment to good Corporate Governance in relation to that particular dimension is exemplified.

2. Community Focus

The Council is committed to working with and for the local community to ensure that the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan respond to the needs of the community. In order to achieve this the Council will:

2.1 Publish annually a strategic plan which sets out the Council's objectives for three years.
2.2 Publish on or before 30th September each year, the Statement of Accounts presenting an objective and audited description of its financial position and performance in the preceding year.
2.3 Actively co-operate with external auditors & inspectors to ensure that there is independent scrutiny of its financial and operational reporting processes.
2.4 Put in place arrangements designed to ensure that individuals and groups from all sections of the community are encouraged to contribute to and participate in, the Council's activities.
2.5 Conduct its business on an open basis wherever possible and in compliance with all statutory requirements.
2.6 Establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and put in place proper monitoring arrangements to ensure that they are operating effectively.
2.7 Work with community partners and residents to ensure that the vision and strategies for local communities are incorporated into the Community Plan.
2.8 Promote citizenship by active involvement with young people.

3. Service Delivery Arrangements

The Council is committed to securing to continuing improvement in the delivery of its services. To meet this commitment the Council will:

3.1 Seek to provide elected members & officer structures that deliver value for money services to the public and that the members and officers have appropriate training to competently deliver their respective roles.
3.2 Ensure good stewardship of public funds and will allocate these funds according to its stated objectives.
3.3 Seek to provide its services in a way that ensures equality of opportunity for both residents and staff. It will carry out regular Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that sufficient focus is maintained on these issues.
3.4 Maintain its commitment to improving performance and will have comprehensive performance plans in place to ensure that this is achieved.
3.5 Using balance scorecards monitor performance on a quarterly basis against performance indicators and agreed service standards
3.6 Seek to develop partnerships with other organisations including public, private and third sector service providers where these can reduce costs without compromising the quality of service provided.
3.7 Ensure that significant partnerships have appropriate governance arrangements to support the delivery of services and stewardship of public funds.

4. Structures and Processes

The Council is committed to establishing and maintaining appropriate structures and procedures to govern its decision-making. In order to meet this commitment, the Council will:

4.1 Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of individual elected members, Council committees and officers are clearly set out in the published constitution.
4.2 Ensure that the Council, the Executive, and Committees and Sub-Committees meet as set out in a published timetable. Meetings will be open to the public unless there are confidential matters to be discussed and for which there is a statutory reasons that justifies the exclusion of the public, and where appropriate allow members of the public to address the meeting on matters that are relevant to items that are included on the agenda.
4.4 Ensure that the Council sets out a clear direction that it will follow through the annual publication of the Strategic Plan. Other supporting documents and strategies including the Revenue & Capital Budgets will also be publicly available.
4.5 Ensure that the Council acts lawfully and that its decisions are appropriately authorised, and its activities are carried out in accordance with these decisions and statutory requirements.
4.6 Ensure that the Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the operational management of the Council.
4.7 Ensure that a properly skilled and qualified senior manager (The “Section 151 Officer”) is appointed to ensure that proper advice can be given on financial matters and that sound financial management is maintained throughout the authority.
4.8 Ensure that a properly skilled senior manager (The “Monitoring Officer”) is appointed to ensure that proper advice can be given on legality and standards of conduct issues and that high ethical standards are promoted and maintained throughout the authority.
4.9 Maintain an effective and comprehensive training programme for elected members.
4.10 Maintain an effective Complaints Procedure that enables members of the public to complain about poor standards of service.
4.11 Ensure that effective processes are in place to enable the Council to comply with all statutory requirements.

4.12 Ensure that elected members and employees of the Council are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest when contracting or procuring by maintaining and keeping up to date Council Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.

5. Risk Management and Internal Control

The Council is committed to the highest standards of care and control over the assets and resources at its disposal and to ensure that these are protected as far as possible from the risk of loss, damage or misuse. In order to meet this commitment, the Council will:

5.1 Maintain robust systems for identifying and evaluating all significant risks. There will be an assessment of risk in each service plan, and in all decisions taken by the Council and the Executive.

5.2 Maintain an effective risk management system and systems of internal control. These will include an effective internal audit function and the Council will be mindful of any advice given by the external auditors as to the adequacy of resources devoted to the internal audit function.

5.3 Ensure that all systems of risk management and internal control are subject to regular review.

5.4 Ensure that the Annual Statement of Accounts is accompanied by objective Annual Governance Statement, including a Statement of Internal Control.

6. Standards of Conduct

The Council believes that good corporate governance is based on the highest levels of integrity and professionalism being applied when conducting the affairs of the authority. The Council is committed to ensuring that these high standards are maintained and that elected members and officers demonstrate a high level of leadership and public service commitment. In order to meet this commitment, the Council will:

6.1 Maintain and regularly review formal codes of conduct for elected members and officers that regulate the standards of behaviour and integrity to which these individuals must adhere.

6.2 Encourage elected members and senior officers of the Council to exercise leadership by conducting themselves in a manner that acts as a role model for others within the Council to follow.

6.3 Maintain and support a Standards Committee to promote high ethical standards of conduct.

6.4 Maintain a grievance and disciplinary procedure to ensure that the highest standards of conduct are maintained by its officers and to investigate allegations that behaviour has fallen by these standards.

6.5 Ensure that all its procedures and processes are designed to reinforce integrity and selflessness and resist bias, prejudice, discrimination and conflicts of interest.

6.6 Have a “Whistle Blowing” procedure in place that enables elected members, officers, and members of the public to report any incidence of behaviour that falls short of the required standards.