



Herefordshire Council

Constitution

1 January 2010

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Code of Corporate Governance**FOREWORD**

Herefordshire Council must meet high ethical and other standards in everything it does; it must comply with legal requirements; and it must use public money and other resources economically, efficiently and effectively, accounting fully for its actions.

In order to discharge these responsibilities, Members and senior Officers must ensure the proper governance of the Council's affairs and the stewardship of its resources.

The Council has therefore adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which observes the requirements of the framework *Corporate Governance in Local Government: a keystone for Community Governance*, approved by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.

The Council's Director of Resources is responsible for the effective application of the Code in matters of financial probity, performance and risk.

The Council's Monitoring Officer is responsible for the effective application of the Code in respect of legal obligations and ethical standards.

Each will make an annual report on the effectiveness of the Code to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, and to the Standards Committee, respectively.

As part of its efforts further to improve standards of governance, the Council will itself carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of the Code.

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE****Introduction**

1. Herefordshire Council must meet high ethical and other standards in everything it does; it must comply with legal requirements; it must serve the people of Herefordshire well; and it must use public money and other resources economically, efficiently and effectively, accounting fully for its actions.
2. This Code of Corporate Governance sets out the Council's promise to the people of Herefordshire about how this will be done.

Responsibilities

3. All Members and Officers have a responsibility to ensure the proper governance of the Council's affairs and the stewardship of its resources. In particular, under the overall responsibility of the Chief Executive, the Council's Director of Resources is responsible for the effective application of the Code in matters of financial probity, performance and risk; and the Monitoring Officer is responsible for the effective application of the Code in respect of legal obligations and ethical standards.

Reporting

4. The Council will report annually on its compliance with this Code. That report will draw upon reports by the Director of Resources to the Audit and Governance Committee and by the Monitoring Officer to the Standards Committee, and upon the opinions of those Committees.

The principles of this Code

5. This Code follows five principles of good governance:
 - Provide the best possible service to the people of Herefordshire
 - Define the roles of Members and Officers, ensure that they work together constructively, and improve their effectiveness
 - Require high standards of conduct
 - Take sound decisions on the basis of good information
 - Be transparent and open: responsive to Herefordshire's needs and accountable to its people.
6. The rest of this Code demonstrates how the Council will put these principles into action.

Provide the best possible service to the people of Herefordshire

7. The Council will
 - Set out a strategic vision for the County, and its intended outcomes for citizens
 - Provide high quality services representing excellent value for money;
 - Develop and sustain effective partnerships
 - Encourage public participation in Herefordshire local government
 - Identify and manage risk
 - Make environmental impact a key part of decision-making at all levels
 - Measure performance rigorously and improve it where necessary

Define the roles of Members and Officers, ensure that they work constructively together, and improve their effectiveness

8. The Council will

- Encourage and support effective leadership, and constructive working relationships, at all levels
- Make clear the roles of Members and Officers, the way in which decisions are taken, and the nature and limits of delegated authority
- Determine remuneration in a transparent and open way, with recommendations on Members' allowances made independently
- Ensure that Members and Officers have the training and support they need to be effective; that their performance is appraised; and that development needs are addressed

Require high standards of conduct

9. The Council will

- Create and maintain a climate of openness, and mutual support and respect
- Ensure that Members and Officers display consistently high standards of conduct
- Be punctilious in ensuring that governance and decision-making reflects these high standards
- Take effective action on "whistleblowing": complaints based on matters of propriety and conscience
- Support an effective Standards Committee

Take sound decisions on the basis of good information

10. The Council will

- Be open about how and why decisions are taken
- Demonstrate and record the evidence and analysis underpinning decisions
- Enable and support effective scrutiny of those decisions
- Guard against any conflict of interest
- Support an effective Audit and Governance Committee

Be transparent and open: responsive to Herefordshire's needs and accountable to its people

11. The Council will

- Be open about its actions and plans, subject to the requirements of the law or of personal or commercial confidentiality
- Give a high priority to communicating and explaining its policies
- Respond readily to public needs and aspirations
- Take prompt and effective action on complaints
- Publish a comprehensive annual report on this Code
- Review this Code annually at the time of the Compliance Report

PREAMBLE TO THE COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

The Ten General Principles of Public Life as contained in the Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001 define the standards that Members should uphold and serve as a reminder of the purpose of the Code of Conduct. These are:

Selflessness – members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and integrity – members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity – members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability – members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal judgement – members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for others – members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

Duty to uphold the law – members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship – members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.

Leadership – members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

(Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001 (S.I.2001/1401))