

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FOR NORTHUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY

Background

Governance is about how police authorities ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable manner.

This Code of Corporate Governance describes how Northumbria Police Authority discharges its responsibilities in this respect, and particularly its two overarching statutory responsibilities:

- To secure an efficient and effective local police service;
- To hold to account the Chief Officer of Northumbria Police Force for the exercise of his/her functions and those of persons under his/her direction and control.

The Chief Constable has a statutory responsibility for the control, direction and delivery of operational policing services.

Northumbria Police Authority Vision

Ensuring Efficient and Effective Policing

To ensure that all people living, working and visiting Northumbria have a police service that promotes and protects their safety.

A police service for Northumbria in which all local people have trust and confidence.

We will:

- Listen to local people, and deal with issues that matter to them and their community.
- Make sure that performance improves each year and tell local people about it.
- Provide a police service that reflects the communities it serves and treats everyone fairly, regardless of who they are.
- Talk to local people, and deal with the issues that matter to them and their community.
- Be open and honest in all that we do.

Principles of Effective Governance

There are six core principles on which effective governance is built.

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

To achieve this, the governance framework ensures that these principles are fully integrated in the conduct of the authority's business as well as establishing a means of demonstrating compliance.

This Code of Corporate Governance identifies how each of the core principles of good governance is put into practice by the authority.

1. Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community to create and implement a vision for the local area.

1.1 Have a common vision underpinning any partnership working.

- a. Ensure effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors.
- b. As a responsible authority on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) contribute to developing and delivering their plans to tackle crime and disorder issues.
- c. As a responsible authority on CDRPs contribute to the development and delivery of Local Area Agreements.
- d. Where improved efficiency and effectiveness will result, support collaboration between forces.

1.2 Measure the quality of local policing services.

- a. An annual Local Policing Plan (LPP) sets out the Authority's expectations for Northumbria Police and plans for the next three years for delivering both national and local policing priorities.
- b. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee (ASC) monitors performance against these expectations and against the Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACs) Performance Management Framework on a quarterly basis.
- c. ASC receives Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Audit Commission Reports and monitors compliance with recommendations.

1.3 Publish an annual report to communicate the authority's activity and achievements, its financial position and performance.

- a. The LPP provides information about resources expected to be available, planned increases in efficiency and productivity and how performance will be measured and judged.
- b. The LPP is supplemented by the publication of a Local Policing Summary, distributed to every household in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. This contains performance and service information for each area command.

1.4 Measure Value for Money and ensure that results are reflected in performance plans.

- a. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a key part of the Authority's Integrated Corporate Planning Process. It links operational planning with financial and resource planning ensuring that resources are directed toward priorities. The MTFS describes the financial direction of the Authority and outlines the financial pressures over a 3-year period. It is also an indication of the direction of financial planning over the next year.
- b. The MTFS provides options for delivering a sustainable budget and capital programme over the medium term and sets out how the Authority can provide the Chief Constable with the resources to deliver the services effectively.

- c. An Annual Efficiency Plan monitored quarterly by Resource Management Committee details how improvements to efficiency and productivity will be achieved.
- d. Where appropriate the Authority works with Northumbria Police to support initiatives which deliver the required efficiency and productivity gains. These include Efficiency Reviews and Value for Money Initiatives.

Evidence

- Vision and Mission Statement
- Local Policing Plan
- Local Policing Summary x 6
- Terms of Reference for Committees
- Audit and Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Minutes
- Resource Management Committee Agenda and Minutes
- Northumbria Police Authority Agenda and Minutes
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Efficiency Plan
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Audit Commission Inspection Report

2. Members and officers working together, achieving a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

2.1 Clearly identify and state the roles and responsibilities of Authority Members.

- a. NPA has Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and Terms of Reference for Committees all of which are reviewed annually. These set out formally and in detail the matters that are delegated to the various committees of the Police Authority.
- b. NPA is collectively responsible for making strategic decisions for example; agreeing the budget for Northumbria Police, setting priorities and performance targets and for overseeing the policy framework.
- c. A Chair to the Authority is elected from amongst the Police Authority members. The Chair carries out the role in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- d. A structure of eight committees, each with different responsibilities supports the full authority.
- e. Each committee has a Chair responsible for ensuring that the committee works within its terms of reference.
- f. A Lead Members structure based on 'Areas of Interest' ensures that all members have the opportunity to support service areas where they have a particular interest or expertise. There is no decision or policy making remit under this structure as those areas remain the responsibility of Northumbria Police Authority.

2.2 Clearly identify and state the roles and responsibilities of Authority Officers.

- a. Delegations to Chief Officers/Advisers are also detailed in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- b. The Chief Executive provides corporate leadership and maintains relations with Northumbria Police and other key external partners and agencies. They oversee all operations of NPA and advise on strategy, management, policy and organisation.
- c. The Treasurer to the Authority and other Advisers have specific delegated powers and responsibilities as detailed in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and Support Service Agreements (SSAs).
- d. The Chief Executive as Monitoring Officer advises on issues of potential illegality or maladministration.
- e. SSAs provide full details of services provided by Gateshead Council as Lead Authority to the Police Authority detailing the individual services provided, performance targets, standards and costs.

2.3 Ensure effective communication between Members and Officers in their respective roles.

- a. A productive relationship exists between the Chair and Chief Executive. This relationship is to some degree a personal one and by its nature cannot be governed by a written protocol.
- b. Adviser's meetings ensure that senior officers of the Authority and Northumbria Police Command Team attend these meetings where necessary.
- c. Members are provided with briefing information and supported when attending external meetings. Officers are able to respond directly to member's queries and to provide advice where necessary.

2.4 There are terms and conditions for remuneration of Members and Officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel.

- a. The current member allowance scheme is based on recommendations from the independent panel set up by the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and was subject to consultation with Members of the Authority.
- b. An annual increase is applied each year.
- c. The APA is currently carrying out a national review of member allowance schemes and comparisons across the country.
- d. Employees are paid in accordance with national conditions of service.

2.5 Have clarity when working in partnership about the legal status of the partnership, roles and responsibilities of partners

- a. Clear structures and procedures in place for the partnership between the NPA and Northumbria Police. The Police Authority

has a strategic decision making and monitoring role whilst the Chief Constable has operational responsibility and command and control of key policing and security services.

- b. For CDRPs the legal status is defined clearly and guidance is provided for partners about their roles and responsibilities.
- c. Any collaborative working with other police authorities is subject to clearly defined terms of reference, leadership and accountability structures.

Evidence

- Northumbria Police Authority Standing Order and Financial Regulations
- Terms of Reference of Committees
- NPA Agendas and Minutes
- Support Services Agreements
- NPA Information Pack

3. Promote values and good governance through high standards of conduct and behaviour.

3.1 Members and Officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that uphold high standards of conduct and exemplify effective governance.

- a. Members and Officers develop and maintain shared values and the vision statement outlines an open and honest approach.
- b. Values are emphasised in training for members (ethics and probity) and officers (for example, as a module in management development provided by the Lead Authority).
- c. All Authority decision making processes include consideration of Human Rights and Equalities Implications ensuring that these are integral to how the organisation conducts its business.
- d. The Authority's Solicitor and Officers undertake a continuous overview of procedures, operations, plans and strategies to ensure that they comply with ethical standards.

3.2 Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Officers of the Authority.

- a. NPA has adopted the Revised Code of Conduct for Members. Rules govern behaviour of members and registration and disclosure of interests. Members are bound by the code when they are conducting Authority business or representing the Authority.
- b. Two provisions of the code apply regardless of whether members are conducting Authority business or not. Firstly a member must not act in a manner which could be regarded as bringing the Authority or their office into disrepute. Secondly, members should not use their office improperly to secure for themselves or any other person an advantage or disadvantage.
- c. Officers of the Authority are guided by formal codes of conduct developed by the Lead Authority. These codes ensure that everyone is aware of what is expected of them.

- d. A quarterly Standards Committee which is independently chaired is responsible for maintaining high standards of conduct in the Authority and takes the lead on raising awareness amongst members.

3.3 Ensure that Members and Officers of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.

- a. There are currently a number of national and local measures in place safeguarding against unfair bias, prejudice or conflicts of interest among employees and members when involved with stakeholders.
- b. Members are required to register their interests in a register maintained by the Authority Solicitor.
- c. Members are required to declare an appropriate interest (personal, prejudicial) when a matter in which they have an interest comes up for discussion at a meeting at which they are present. The register of interests is regularly reviewed by the Authority Solicitor.
- d. Officers are subject to rules on conflicts of interest which are set out in the Code of Conduct for Employees and in Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972. In addition, for some categories of post where there is an exceptionally high risk of conflict of interest, such as auditors, there is a requirement to complete a register of interests.
- e. The rules on conflict of interest are reinforced in training sessions for both Members and Officers and they may seek advice.

Evidence

- Guidance from the Standards Board for England
- NPA Members Code of Conduct
- Members Register of Interest
- Agendas and Minutes from the Standards Committee
- Employee Handbook

4. The authority aims to take informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management arrangements.

4.1 Taking informed and transparent decisions

- a. All decisions of the Authority and its committees are based on written reports which include all relevant evidence and reasons for adopting the proposed course of action. These reasons are then recorded in the minutes of the body concerned.
- b. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee meets quarterly and takes an overview of the Authority's arrangements for audit and risk management.
- c. All decisions of the Authority are supported by information on financial and legal implications provided by professional officers within the authority.

- d. Advisers who take key decisions under delegated powers are required to report retrospectively where appropriate to the relevant committee.
- e. All agendas and minutes are open to public inspection and available on the NPA website. This is subject to lawful exemptions under access to information rules.
- f. The authority holds meetings in venues across the area and actively encourages members of local communities to attend.
- g. The Authority operates a system for ensuring that reports are included on agendas in a timely fashion and only after full consultation.
- h. The Authority Solicitor will identify any issue of vires whilst ensuring that the authority uses its powers to their full potential.

4.2 Make effective arrangements for ‘whistleblowing’, accessible to all Officers.

- a. The Lead Authority has a ‘whistleblowing’ procedure set out in the employee handbook.
- b. The procedure has not specifically been extended to contractors although it would be possible for a relevant issue to be raised by a contractor and dealt with under procedure.

4.3 Ensure that Risk Management is embedded into the culture of the organisation.

- a. Risk management is embedded into the culture of the Authority, with members and officers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job. Audit and Scrutiny Committee receive a quarterly report to meet their duty in the terms of reference to monitor implementation of the Authority’s risk management strategy.
- b. Risk management is closely aligned to strategic objectives with a clear focus on those significant risks that would prevent the Authority achieving its key business objectives.
- c. The Authority has a Corporate Risk Management Policy which is subject to annual review.
- d. The Authority maintains and reviews a Strategic Risk Register, which is subject to annual review.
- e. Quarterly updates to ASC review existing and new strategic risks to ensure that management action, service development and if necessary resources are directed to mitigate risks.
- f. An Operational Risk Register is maintained, which is subject to an annual review. At Service level, managers identify and manage those operational risks that could inhibit the effective delivery of services to users.
- g. Risk management is addressed from the perspective of the Authority and the Force, with an emphasis on the shared objectives, risks and integrated approach to risk. A Joint Statement on Risk Management provides a commitment by both parties to risk management and coupled with Management Policy

Statements for the Authority and Force provides a framework for a fully integrated approach.

- h. A “Shared” Strategic Risk Register compliments the Strategic Risk Registers of the two bodies, highlighting those risks, which they have in common, to facilitate the joined-up management of those risks through the sharing of good practice and avoidance of the duplication of resources.
- i. All reports for decision-making highlight the risk management implications of the proposal.
- j. Corporate risk management awareness training is provided for all members and is part of the Lead Authority’s Employee/Management Competency Framework.

Evidence

- NPA Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- Agendas and Minutes of NPA and committees
- Terms of Reference of Committees
- Code of conduct for Members
- Members Register of Interest
- Corporate Risk Management Policy
- Joint Statement on Risk Management
- The Confidential Reporting Code
- The Bullying and Harassment Policy

5. The Authority aims to develop the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective in their roles

5.1 Ensure that members have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.

- a. All new Police Authority Members receive an induction that includes information about their role and responsibility and also about the Authority and Northumbria Police as organisations.
- b. A members’ information pack is given to all members and includes information on the Members Code of Conduct and Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- c. Members have the opportunity to update their knowledge through in-house seminars on different topics, in-house training and external courses and conferences.
- d. A members’ area on the NPA website provides information and documents that are of interest on an ongoing basis.

5.2 Ensure that officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.

- a. The two statutory officers within the Authority, Chief Executive, Solicitor and Treasurer hold relevant professional qualifications and have substantial public sector experience but are given further development through seminars and conferences organised by their respective professional bodies and others.

- b. The Lead Authority has an agreed Human Resources Strategy - 'Setting the Standards in People Management' which enables managers to realise the full potential of their team.
- c. There is a corporate induction event but employee induction is primarily the responsibility of individual line managers and is given to new employees of the Lead Authority. Induction programmes contain a mixture of similar elements but focus on the individual employee and is planned and organised in a way to suit how he/she learns.
- d. Officers' needs to update their knowledge are discussed as part of the Lead Authority Achievement and Development process.

Evidence

- NPA Members Information Pack
- APA Members Guide to Learning and Development
- The Human Resource Strategy
- Lead Authority Managers Guide to Induction
- Achievement and Development Framework

6. The Authority aims to engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

6.1 Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community and employees with a commitment to openness and transparency.

- a. Meetings of the Authority and Committees are public except where personal or confidential matters are being discussed.
- b. Complaints can be made to the Standards Board for England where it is considered that a Member has not followed the Code of Conduct;
- c. Issues can be raised through a complaints procedure if there is dissatisfaction with the actions (or lack of action) of the Authority or its Officers.
- d. Recorded information can be accessed under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- e. Inspection of the Authority's accounts is permitted and questions about the accounts can be raised with the Authority's external auditor.

6.2 Establish clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders.

- a. The Authority is pro-active in its approach to community engagement. The aim is to ensure all local people are well informed about the Authority; actively involved in influencing what happens in their local area and ensuring delivery of the policing services that meet the needs of local people.

- b. A number of different methods are used to seek the views including: Residents' Surveys, Citizens' Panel and Police and Community Forums.
- c. A Members Reference Group is currently working with Officers to develop a consultation and engagement strategy that can respond to the changing environment.
- d. The Authority understands that when working in partnership, information from other agencies should be considered when exploring engagement strategies.
- e. The Authority holds meetings in venues across the area and actively encourages members of local communities to attend.

6.3 Ensure that employees and their representatives are involved in decision making.

- a. The Lead Authority aims to modernise and improve employee relations, structures and processes and works in close partnership with Trade Unions.
- b. Progress is monitored through regular employee attitude surveys.

6.4 Reassure communities that results of consultation and engagement are reflected in decision making.

- a. NPA conducts as much formal business as possible in public meetings.
- b. The Local Plan outlines how issues identified through consultation are included in the priority setting process.
- c. Local people attending Police and Community Forums are contacted by the local area commander with feedback from the meeting.
- d. When engaged in specific consultation for policy development, for example the Disability Equality Scheme feedback is provided about the impact of the consultation on the exercise.

Evidence

- Residents Survey
- User Satisfaction Survey
- Agenda and Minutes of Citizen Focus Committee
- Minutes of Police and community Forums.
- Terms of Reference for Committees
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- Freedom Of Information Act 2000
- Employee Attitude Survey
- The Human Resources Strategy