PART 8

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

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Owner: Monitoring Officer

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

1.   Corporate Governance can be described as "the system by which local government directs and controls their functions and relate to their communities".

2.   It is the way in which South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (SYFRA) ensures it delivers its services in an efficient, effective, open and honest way, considering the needs of the people and communities we serve.

3.   The Authority's strategies, policies, culture and values all contribute to shaping the way it directs controls and delivers its services. Our purpose 'Making South Yorkshire Safer and Stronger' is at the heart of everything we do. The Service's 'Aspirations', as set out in the 10 year vision 'Our Story' underpin this.

4.   This Code is the framework which sets out how SYFRA will carry out its functions based on the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework 2016, which sets out standards for local authorities.

5.   The general public have a right to expect the highest standards of conduct from its community leaders and institutions.

6.   Three high level principles underpin Corporate Governance, which the Authority supports:

   •   Openness and inclusivity
   •   Accountability
   •   Integrity

7.   The concept of leadership overarches these three fundamental principles.

8.   The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 2016 expands the high-level principles to define seven detailed principles of good governance and this Code of Corporate Governance has been updated by the Fire and Rescue Authority to reflect those seven principles.

9.   This Code takes each of these seven principles in turn and sets out what the Authority commits itself to do by this Code, and how it will do it, utilising the supporting principles to do so.

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

10.   We will:

   •   Behave with integrity
   •   Demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values
   •   Respect the rule of the Law

11. How we will do it:

12. The Authority will foster a culture of behaviour based on shared values, high ethical principles and conduct. This will be done through embedding our refreshed vision, purpose and aspirations, and behaviours.

13. Our behaviours (i.e. our identifiable characteristic traits) have been developed by staff which mean most to them, and these are **'Honesty, Integrity and Respect'**. All our staff are expected to display these behaviours every day in everything they do.

14. Supported by appropriate actions, strategies, policies and procedures:

   - Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities and the standards of conduct expected of them through communication, training and awareness:
     - Member and Employee Codes of Conduct
     - Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policies
     - Equality and Inclusion Strategy
   - Maintaining a Register of Interests and Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality accepted.
   - Enabling staff and the public to report issues through a Confidential Reporting policy and process.
   - Complaints and Compliments process and reporting.
   - Confidential 'Whistleblowing' reporting policy and process.
   - Performance Management Policy.

15. Measured by:

   - Completion and recording of the induction process for new staff so they are aware of the Service's Priorities, Aspirations, Behaviours, Key policies and procedures.
   - Completion and recording of mandatory e-learning training modules.
   - Regular review and updates to policies in line with set timescales.
   - Analysis and reporting of Complaints and Compliments to the Fire Authority on a regular basis.

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

16. We will:

   - Proactively demonstrate openness.
   - Proactively engage comprehensively with institutional stakeholders.
   - Proactively engage with individual citizens and service users.

17. How we will do it:

18. The Authority will actively communicate its purpose, 10 year vision and intended outcomes for its communities.

19. By delivering the aspiration to 'Put People First' *"spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve".*

20. And through our behaviours 'to be open and honest in everything we do'.

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21. Supported by appropriate actions, strategies, policies and procedures:

- Webcasting Authority meetings where appropriate to increase transparency of decision making.
- Supporting the public in making requests for information to the Authority and raising concerns.
- Proactively publishing information and making it available for citizens and service users.
- Consulting with our communities and stakeholders on our plans including our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).
- Consulting with staff on our new Visions and Aspirations.
- Utilise our Stakeholder Planning Board and lead Member for Stakeholder Engagement.
- Support community outcomes through the Authority's Stronger, Safer Communities Reserve (SSCR) fund.
- Ensuring sound governance arrangements are in place for Partnerships.
- External Communications Strategy detailing methods of engaging with the public.
- Obtaining direct feedback from service users and our staff on our services.

22. Measured by:

- Availability and view rates of webcast meetings.
- Regular reporting of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection Requests for Information to the Fire Authority.
- Availability of information on the Service and Authority website, in line with our Publication Scheme.
- Feedback from Stakeholders on our engagement activity
- Feedback from staff through regular 'pulse' surveys, and related performance measure.
- Evaluation of the benefits of SSCR projects.
- Evaluation of our partnership arrangements.
- Evaluation of post incident and post Home Safety Check feedback surveys.
- Evaluation of our external communications campaigns.

Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

23. We will:

- Identify and define outcomes and;
- Consider Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental benefits.

24. How we will do it:

25. The Authority will, in exercising Strategic Leadership, communicate its purpose and 10 year vision and intended outcomes for citizens and service users. It will report regularly on activities, performance and the Authority's financial position:

- Develop our 2020- IRMP and Strategic Plan.
- Embed our 10 Vision and Aspirations.
- Update our Environmental Policy.
- Effectively manage our finances through Budget Setting, Medium Term Financial Planning and Capital Programme of works.
- Actively pursuing collaboration opportunities with Partners, building on our Collaboration Programme with the Police.

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26. Measured by:

- Feedback from the public and stakeholders on our draft IRMP and plans.
- Feedback from staff on our draft IRMP and plans.
- Publication of an updated Environmental Policy, with supporting performance measures.
- Regular monitoring and reporting of our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- Evaluate the outcomes and impact of our activities i.e. evaluation of our Partnership work considering social return on investment for SSCR projects.
- Evaluation of the outcomes of our Collaboration Programmes and Projects.
- Regularly measure and report on our performance against our intended outcomes.

Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

27. We will:

- Determine the interventions needed to deliver the defined outcomes.
- Prioritise and Plan the interventions.
- Optimise achievement of intended outcomes (through effective planning and financial management).
- Record and dynamically review delivery of outcomes.

28. How we will do it:

- Use Programme and Project Management Governance to effectively identify and deliver the benefits and changes identified in our IRMP, Strategic Plan, and other key strategies.
- Robust Corporate Planning processes.
- Clear and transparent decision making structures.
- Publish an updated MTFP which includes and supports the delivery of our IRMP and Strategic Plan and other key strategies.
- Improve access to data and information to inform decision making, utilising technology where appropriate and implementing the ICT Strategy and Transformation Programme to achieve this goal.
- Understanding the risks to achievement of strategic objectives and managing them appropriately.

29. Measured by:

- Programme and Project Assurance - to provide assurance during the delivery of projects.
- Implementation of robust benefits realisation for projects.
- Evaluation of projects post-delivery i.e. post implementation reviews, lessons learned.
- Up to date Constitution published on the FRA website, including decision making structures and Scheme of Delegation.
- Recording of decisions through minutes and action logs at key Service and Authority meetings.
- Regular reports on the MTFP to Fire Authority Meetings, and budget management performance measures.
- Implementation of the ICT Transformation Programme of work and appropriate governance monitoring/ evaluation.
- Regular risk reviews, and reporting of Corporate/strategic Risks, available to view publically on the Authority website.

- Separate Member-led Performance and Scrutiny Board considering a range of topics to provide additional support, scrutiny and challenge.

Core Principle E: Developing the Authority's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

30. We will:

- Ensure those in leadership positions within the Authority and Service have the knowledge and skills to perform their duties, particularly in regard to governance.
- Ensure that the necessary roles and responsibilities for the effective governance of the Authority are identified and allocated so that it is clear who is accountable for decisions that are made.
- Develop the Authority's capacity (to deliver its services) including supporting those in leadership with governance responsibility.
- Develop the capability of its leadership and other officers.

31. How we will do it:

- Member learning and Development programme.
- Staff training and Development programme - supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Professional Standards development.
- Performance Management and Review process.
- Ongoing Professional Development schemes.
- Implementation of the People Strategy.
- Succession planning for the future.
- Scheme of Delegation – to ensure decisions are made at the right level.
- *'Be Brave'* and empower managers to make informed decisions.
- Providing mentoring and support to Members and Officers.
- Lead Members for key governance areas.
- Member Corporate Advisory Group (no delegated powers) – covers strategic planning, post-implementation discussions etc.

32. Measured by:

- Dynamically reviewing all of the above to continually learn, develop and improve.
- Evaluation of Member learning and development programmes.
- Evaluation and feedback from staff on training and development programmes.
- Performance Review process.
- Monitoring of actions against to deliver the People Strategy.
- Effective succession plans in place for key roles; performance measure relating to successful recruitment and staff turnover.
- Availability and take up of mentoring to Members and Officers.

Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

33.   We will:

- Manage risk effectively at all levels.
- Manage performance effectively.
- Implement robust internal control.
- Manage data effectively.
- Demonstrate strong financial management.
- Map risk to financial and other internal controls.
- Manage risks within projects.

34.   How we will do it:

35.   The Authority will ensure that its risk management approach supports decision making and the achievement of its strategic priorities and objectives, complying with relevant statutory obligations. The Audit and Governance Committee will continue to monitor and review the governance processes and ensure Internal Control systems are effective:

- Continuing to develop and embed governance controls and a risk management culture.
- Ensure risks are discussed and captured at key meetings where decisions are made.
- Implement recommendations from internal and external audit reviews.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for managing risk, performance, and budgets.
- Regularly conduct a holistic review and update of the Authority's Constitution.

36.   Measured by:

- Self-assessment and Internal Audit review of the Service's Internal Control Framework.
- Peer review of risk management arrangements against an agreed framework.
- Regular monitoring of progress against Internal Audit recommendations.
- Regular review of project, department and Corporate Risk Registers.
- Officer Fire Governance Co-Ordination Group meet quarterly to discuss all aspects of governance and risk.
- Regular reporting and monitoring through the Audit and Governance Committee's work programme.

Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

37.   We will:

- Implement good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- Implement good reporting practice.
- Provide assurance and effective accountability.

38.	How we will do it:

- Publication of information on the Authority and Service website relating to decision making, Procurement, Senior Officer salaries etc. in line with the Publication Scheme and requirements of the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code of Practice.
- Regular review of the Constitution (every three years as a minimum).
- Having a work programme for the Audit and Governance Committee to provide assurance and accountability, monitoring and review.
- Publication of agendas, reports and minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee.
- Internal Audit reviews.
- Acting upon recommendations from Internal and External Audit.
- Preparing and publishing an Annual Governance Statement.
- Preparing and publishing the Statement of Accounts.
- Preparing and publishing an Annual Statement of Assurance (as required by the Fire Service National Framework).
- Publication of performance information.
- Engagement in the HMICFRS Inspection and responding to recommendations made.
- Webcasting of Fire Authority meetings.

39.	Measured by:

- Availability of information to required timescales on the Authority and Service websites, in line with the Publication Scheme and 2015 Local Government Transparency Code of Practice.
- Detailed work programme in place for Audit and Governance Committee.
- Monitoring of the Governance Improvement Plan emanating from the Annual Governance Statement process.
- Internal Audit detailed annual plan/programme of work.
- Regular monitoring of progress against Internal Audit recommendations.
- Publication to timescales of an Annual Statement of Assurance.
- Publication to timescales of the Statement of Accounts.
- Timely publication of Service performance information i.e. quarterly and annual performance reports.
- Regular monitoring of progress against recommendations made by the HMICFRS.

Roles and Responsibilities

40.	All Members and Officers are expected to commit to the Authority's principles of good governance, as defined above.

41.	The Corporate Management Team has a collective responsibility for good governance, but this is underpinned by the role of the three statutory Officers of the Authority:

- Head of Paid Service = Chief Fire Officer
- Monitoring Officer = Head of Legal Services, Barnsley MBC (and in their absence or other inability to act any appointed Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Chief Finance Officer /Section 151 Officer = Service Director Finance, Barnsley MBC

42.	The Director for Support Services has responsibility for the direction and review of corporate governance within the Service.

43.   Individual Officers are responsible for the policies and procedures which fall within their functional responsibilities and ensuring these are up to date, are being complied with and are effective in achieving good governance.

44.   Fire Governance Co-Ordination Group is made up of Officers from the Service and Joint Authorities Governance Unit, Barnsley MBC. The Group are collectively responsible for reviewing governance arrangements against the CIPFA/Solace guidance, preparing a Code of Corporate Governance for SYFRA, producing the Annual Governance Statement, ensuring an ongoing review of Internal Control, under the direction of the Monitoring Officer.

Monitoring and review

45.   The Monitoring Officer will report annually on compliance with this Code and the effectiveness of the Authority's governance arrangements, in the form of an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This will be published alongside the Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.

46.   The Service will undertake regular reviews of its internal control arrangements to ensure that any issues or risks are highlighted and reviewed by the Fire Governance Co-Ordination Group, and included in the Governance Improvement Plan, which supports the AGS, and identifies actions and responsible owners.

47.   The Service's Internal Control Management Assurance Framework will be used to assess, monitor and improve the processes and systems that are in place to achieve good governance.