Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Code of Corporate Governance

17 January 2025

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1. Introduction

Corporate governance refers to how an organisation is directed, controlled, and managed. It defines the relationships and the distribution of rights and responsibilities among everyone involved in the organisation. Furthermore, it establishes rules and procedures for setting organisational objectives, provides mechanisms for achieving those objectives and facilitates monitoring performance. Importantly, corporate governance defines where accountability lies within the organisation.

This Code outlines our commitment to upholding high standards of corporate governance by setting out the principles we apply to ensure we are achieving our intended outcomes while acting in the public interest. It aims to provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of our operations and business.

2. Purpose

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (hereby known as 'the Authority') is the publicly accountable body that oversees the service delivery of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the community. The Authority is committed to demonstrating that it has the necessary arrangements in place to perform effectively and this Code illustrates how it will meet this commitment.

The purpose of this Code is to bring together the various stands of our governance arrangements into one single document. It serves as a public statement that outlines how the Authority will meet and demonstrate its commitment to good governance. It describes how the Authority will fulfil its responsibilities and govern the fire service in accordance with good governance principles. It reflects the Authority's structure, functions, and governance arrangements which encompass systems, processes, culture, and values by which the Authority is directed and controlled.

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that services are delivered in compliance with the law and statutory responsibilities, safeguarding and properly accounting for public funds and using these funds in accordance with Best Value Principles. Good corporate governance requires the Authority to conduct its functions with accountability, transparency, effectiveness, integrity, impartiality, and inclusivity.

3. The core principles of good governance

At the heart of the Code are the seven core principles of good corporate governance, each accompanied by supporting characteristics that outline how the Authority will demonstrate these principles in practice.

The seven principles from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (CIPFA/SOLACE) Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016).

This framework guides the Authority in developing a measured and proportionate approach to governance and provides a structure for assessing and reporting on the effectiveness of our corporate governance arrangements in the Annual Governance Statement.

The accompanying diagram illustrates that good governance is a dynamic process and emphasises that improving governance requires constant evaluation and review.

Principles A and B focus on **acting in the public interest** and are behaviourally orientated and influence the application of the other five principles:

- **Principle A.** Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

- **Principle B.** Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Principles C to G should be implemented as a series of activities to enhance governance and foster continuous improvement, **ensuring effective arrangements are in place for**:

- **Principle C.** Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

- **Principle D.** Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes.

- **Principle E.** Developing the Authority's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

- **Principle F.** Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

- **Principle G.** Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Each principle focuses on specific aspects of the Authority's governance responsibilities. Section 7 of this Code outlines the key roles within the Authority's governance framework, while Sections 8 and 9 offer supporting evidence of how the Authority fulfils its commitment to good governance.

The CIPFA/SOLACE framework supports the Authority in reviewing and accounting for its approach, with the overall aim of ensuring that:

- Resources are allocated according to agreed policies and priorities.
- Decision-making is sound and inclusive.
- There is clear accountability for resources used to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.

The framework further enables the Authority to monitor the success of its strategic objectives and to assess whether those objectives are being met and delivering value for money.

Good governance leads to effective:

- Leadership and management
- Performance and risk management
- Stewardship of public funds
- Public engagement and consultation
- Outcomes for service users and the public

4. The importance of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is a significant part of the Authority's governance framework. It is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level, acknowledging that it cannot eliminate all risks associated with achieving policies, aims and objectives. Therefore, it can only provide reasonable, not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to achieving the Authority's objectives. It evaluates the likelihood of those risks being realised, the impact should they be realised, and manages them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

The system of internal control ensures that in conducting its business, the Authority:

- Upholds its values and ethical standards.
- Operates in a lawful, open, inclusive, and honest manner.
- Ensures that its vision, mission, and purpose drive the service planning, delivery, risk management arrangements, project, and performance management.
- Manages human, financial, environmental, and other resources efficiently and effectively.
- Implements a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- Conducts consultation, engagement, and communication strategies for both internal and external stakeholders.
- Establishes robust arrangements for the management of risk.
- Safeguards public funds and assets from inappropriate use, loss, or fraud, ensuring they are properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.
- Maintains accurate records and information.
- Promotes continuous improvement in its operations.

5. Benefits of operating a governance framework

There are significant benefits to operating a governance framework including streamlined and synchronised information on performance and the management of risk, which helps the Authority operate efficiently and effectively.

An effective governance framework:

- Provides timely and reliable information about the effectiveness of risk management and control issues.
- Facilitates the escalation of risk and control issues to the attention of senior officers, by presenting a comprehensive view of governance across the risk environment.
- Identifies gaps in governance that are vital to the Authority and allows for prompt action to address them.
- Raises awareness of the Authority's risk profile and strengthens accountability and ownership of controls and assurance, preventing duplication or overlap.
- Provides supporting evidence to produce the Annual Governance Statement.
- Clarifies, rationalises, and consolidates multiple assurance inputs, offering greater oversight of governance for the Authority.

6. Monitoring and Review

Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations (2015) requires the Authority to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the systems of its internal control systems and include a statement reporting on the review, known as an Annual Governance Statement.

The Authority monitors its governance arrangements in practice and reviews them annually to ensure they remain current and effective. The review process:

- Assesses compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance.
- Provides an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's governance arrangements.
- Outlines how continuous improvement in governance systems will be achieved.

Key sources of assurance are drawn from:

- Feedback from elected members (Councillors).
- Assurance from Statutory Officers.
- Input from senior managers in the Service, who are responsible for developing and maintaining the governance environment.
- Corporate risk management arrangements.
- Independent findings from Internal Audit regarding the internal control environment, along with the Head of Internal Auditor's annual report.
- Views from the External Auditor.
- Recommendations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services or other relevant external bodies or review agencies.
- Partnership governance arrangements.
- Counter fraud and corruption arrangements.

The results of this assessment are used to:

- Identify actions needed for continuous improvement in corporate governance.
- Identify new and emerging governance issues.

- Inform the work of internal audit.
- Update the Code of Corporate Governance.
- Prepare the Annual Governance Statement, which is scrutinised by the Governance Committee, Fire Authority and publicly reported in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

7. Key roles in the Authority's governance framework

Role of the Authority

The Authority is the publicly accountable body responsible for overseeing Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the communities of Tyne and Wear. It operates under a constitution that outlines the governance framework for conducting its business. Responsibilities and functions are assigned to the Authority's committees/sub-committee or senior officers through a scheme of delegation.

As the decision-making body, the Authority approves the constitution, fire service strategy, governance reports, and budgetary framework. Elected members, with support from their officer colleagues, are responsible for:

- Determining the policy direction of the fire service.
- Setting a budget to fund the delivery of that policy direction.
- Conducting scrutiny to ensure that intended outcomes are being achieved efficiently, effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Authority's constitution details its operational procedures, including the roles, responsibilities and relationships between committees, decision-making processes, and procedures to ensure that decisions are efficient, transparent, and accountable to local communities. Some processes are mandated by law, while others are determined by the Authority.

The Authority is composed of seventeen elected members. Fire Authority meetings are monthly from June to April, with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) occurring each June. At the AGM, the format and structure of the Authority's democratic decision-making process are reaffirmed, and approval is given for the appointment of a Chair, Deputy Chair, and members of each committee/sub-committee. The composition of each committee reflects the political balance of the elected members, and the terms of reference and responsibilities of the committees are detailed in the constitution.

The committee structure includes three standing committees: the Governance Committee, Policy and Performance Committee and Human Resources Committee. Additionally, there are three further committees and one subcommittee that convene to address specific issues: the Appointments Committee, Disciplinary Appeals Committee, Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee and an Emergency Committee.

The Authority and its committees monitor the effectiveness of risk management arrangements, regularly review governance practices, consider, and review internal and external audit plans, reports, and review, scrutinise, and approve the Annual Statement of Accounts. They also receive regular feedback from senior officers regarding services and the achievement of objectives and targets.

Role of the Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is an essential part of the Authority's governance framework. It independently assesses the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's governance arrangements, risk management and the internal control environment.

The remit and functions of the Governance Committee are guided by the CIPFA Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2022), which outlines best practices for roles and responsibilities.

The Committee is chaired by an independent person, in line with best practice and includes two independent persons along with elected members of the Authority to provide external scrutiny. The Committee meets regularly to scrutinise both financial and non-financial performance and is responsible for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Authority's risk management arrangements, internal controls and governance processes ensuring that these systems comply with statutory requirements and other relevant regulations and guidance.
- Reviewing governance arrangements through reports prepared by officers responsible for governance.
- Making recommendations regarding relevant governance aspects of the constitution.
- Reviewing internal audit's Annual Audit Plan and Report, as well as the reports and opinions of the external auditor, including the Auditor's Annual Report and other inspection agencies.
- Monitoring the implementation of actions in response to any issues raised by auditors and inspectors.
- Overseeing the Authority's ethical framework and promoting high standards of conduct, working closely with the Monitoring Officer to address complaints about Member conduct.
- Ensuring that the Authority's assurance statements accurately reflect the risk environment and identify appropriate actions needed for improvement.
- Approving the Annual Accounts while monitoring the financial position throughout the financial year, including the year-end out-turn.
- Providing recommendations and comments to the Authority for consideration, as necessary.

Role of Statutory Officers

The Authority must appoint statutory officers who are essential for ensuring that it conducts its affairs appropriately.

Head of Paid Services is the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority

The Head of Paid Services has overall responsibility for the management and operational activities of the fire service and:

- Provides professional advice to the Authority and its committees; and
- Ensures a system for recording and reporting Authority decisions, together with the Monitoring Officer.

Chief Financial Officer is the Director of Finance, Estates and Facilities

The Chief Financial Officer, as defined by CIPFA and as set out in section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, whose role is to ensure the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs. The Director of Finance, Estates and Facilities serves as the Section 151 Officer and is a qualified accountant, supported by the Financial Services Team which includes several professionally qualified finance officers.

The responsibilities of the Director of Finance, Estates and Facilities include:

- Ensuring that sound systems of financial control are in place to prevent fraud and error while achieving value for money.
- Providing an effective internal audit service.
- Monitoring the Authority's financial position throughout the year and considering the financial implications of decision-making, while ensuring compliance with financial processes.
- Providing advice to officers and elected members on financial matters in line with CIPFA's statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016). The Authority's financial management arrangements must conform to the governance requirements outlined in this CIPFA statement.

Monitoring Officer is the Assistant Director of Law and Governance at Sunderland City Council

The Monitoring Officer is a qualified solicitor and as set out in section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 has the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws, and regulations, and safeguarding the lawfulness and fairness of decision-making.
- Reporting on issues that may be illegal or could constitute maladministration.
- Addressing matters related to the conduct of elected members and Principal Officers.
- Overseeing the operation of the Authority's constitution and advising on the adherence of decisions to the constitution.

Senior Information Risk Owner is the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

The Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) is accountable for information risk across the Authority. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) and the Information Governance Advisor support this role.

Good information risk management is a collective responsibility throughout all levels of the Authority, with practices conducted in accordance with the Information Management Framework.

Role of Management

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service operates two tiers of senior management, crucial for maintaining the Authority's governance framework.

Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team currently comprises the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, four Area Managers and three Directors.

The Executive Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Implementing policy and budgetary frameworks and providing advice to the Authority and its Committees on the development of future policies, procedures, and budgetary matters.
- Overseeing the delivery of the Service's corporate strategy and ensuring policy implementation.
- Monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations or other recommendations to address weaknesses in internal controls.
- Providing clear direction to the Senior Leadership Team.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team comprises of Group Managers and Department Heads who are responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the governance, risk, and control framework.
- Contributing to the effective corporate management and governance of the Service.
- Ensuring that audit and other recommendations to address weaknesses in internal controls are promptly acted upon.

Role of Internal Audit

Internal audit provides independent assurance and opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's risk management and control framework and is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of systems and internal controls.

The Authority has a Service Level Agreement with Sunderland City Council to provide an independent internal audit function. Internal audit operates in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (2017).

Internal Audit delivers an annual audit plan focussed on risk-based audit activities, developed in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Finance, Estates and Facilities based on an assessment of current risks. After each audit, a draft report, and proposed action plan (if necessary), is sent to the appropriate manager. Upon reaching an agreement, a final report, including any agreed-upon action plan, is submitted to the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and the Director of Finance, Estates and Facilities.

The Internal Audit Plan sets out the work scheduled for the upcoming financial year. Progress on the audit plan is reported regularly to the Governance Committee, culminating with an end of year assessment and report that informs the Annual Governance Statement.

The Internal Audit Plan outlines the work scheduled for the next financial year. Progress on the audit plan is reported regularly to the Governance Committee, culminating in an end-of-year assessment that informs the Annual Governance Statement.

Audit recommendations are monitored, and updates on their progress are provided to the Governance Committee. An Annual Report is prepared for the Governance Committee to assure elected members regarding the Authority's internal control system.

Role of External Audit

The Authority’s current external auditors are Forvis Mazars, a limited liability partnership appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.

The external auditors audit the financial statement and provide an opinion on whether these statements provide a true and fair view of the Authority’s financial position as of 31 March, as well as the income and expenditure for the year ended.

Additionally, the external auditors assess whether the Authority has established proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources and provide a detailed assessment of these arrangements.

The Annual Audit Report offers independent assurance regarding the Authority’s financial controls and value for money arrangements. It includes a thorough analysis and commentary on the financial resilience and overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority’s systems.

Role of Risk Management

A strong risk management framework is essential for the Service’s operational delivery and decision-making processes. The Risk Management Policy and Procedure ensures transparency and provides a comprehensive approach to risk management.

Directorate and strategic risk registers are maintained, along with appropriate action plans to mitigate and manage identified risks. The Executive Leadership Team reviews the corporate risk register, as necessary. Directorate risk registers are discussed during team meetings, including those led by the Senior Leadership Team.

To ensure that risk is considered when making decisions, all reports presented to elected members include a risk assessment of the proposed actions or their implications. Additionally, these reports evaluate financial, equality and fairness, and health and safety considerations. Risk assessments are also integrated into the fire service's project and programme management processes.

8. How the Authority meets the principles of good governance

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

The Authority are accountable for how much they spend, and how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs both positive and negative, and for the outcomes that are achieved.

In addition, the Authority has an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest by adhering to legislation and government policies. It is essential that the Authority can demonstrate the appropriateness of its actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce ethical values and respect for the law.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Behaving with integrity

- Ensuring elected members and employees behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the Authority.
- Ensuring elected members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the Authority and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).
- Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision-making and other actions.
- Demonstrating, communicating, and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes, which are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are operating effectively.

Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values

- Monitor and maintain the Authority's ethical standards and performance.
- Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Authority's culture and operation.
- Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures, which emphasise agreed ethical values.
- Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Authority are required to act with integrity and in compliance with ethical standards expected by the Authority.

Respecting the rule of law

- Ensuring elected members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.
- Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders, and elected members, can fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities, and other stakeholders.
- Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively, ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

Principle B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

The fire service operates for the public good and therefore, the Authority should ensure openness in all its activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as stakeholders.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Openness

- Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting, and communicating the Authority's commitment to openness.
- Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs, and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided.
- Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear.
- Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action.

Engaging comprehensively with stakeholders

- Effectively engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.
- Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.
- Ensuring that partnerships are based on:
    - Trust.
    - A shared commitment to change.
    - A culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners.
    - The added value of partnership working is explicit.

Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

- Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the Authority will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.
- Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that elected members and staff are clear about their roles regarding community engagement.
- Encouraging, collecting, and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of diverse backgrounds including reference to future needs. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms to demonstrate how views have been considered.
- Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.
- Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of taxpayers and service users.

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

The long-term nature and impact of the Authority's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these are sustainable. Decisions should further the fire service's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources.

Input from all groups of stakeholders is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Defining outcomes

- Having a clear vision, which is an agreed formal statement of the Authority's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, provides the basis for the Authority's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.
- Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over a year or longer.
- Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.

Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefit

- Considering and balancing the combined economic, social, and environmental impact of policies and plans when making decisions about service provision.
- Taking a longer-term view about decision-making, taking account of risk, and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the Authority's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints.
- Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social, and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible to ensure appropriate trade-offs.
- Ensuring fair access to services.

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

The Authority achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that the fire service must make to ensure that intended outcomes are achieved. Robust decision-making mechanisms ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that the achievement of outcomes is optimised.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Determining interventions

- Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks. Therefore, ensuring best value is achieved, however, services are provided.
- Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land, and assets and bearing in mind future impacts.

Planning interventions

- Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities, and targets.
- Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.
- Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks.
- Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances.
- Establishing appropriate key performance indicators as part of the planning process to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured.
- Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly.
- Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Informing medium and long-term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

- Ensuring the Medium Term Financial Strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability, and other resource constraints.
- Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, considering the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term.
- Ensuring the Medium Term Financial Strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.
- Ensuring the achievement of ‘social value’ through service planning and commissioning.

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

The Authority needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills and appropriate qualifications to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within specified periods.

The fire service must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its strategic objectives and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which the fire service operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members.

Leadership is strengthened by the participation of people of diverse types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Developing the Authority's capacity

- Reviewing operations, performance, and use of assets regularly to ensure their continuing effectiveness.
- Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently.
- Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved.
- Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources

Developing the capacity of the Authority's leadership and other individuals

- Developing protocols to ensure that elected members and officers negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.
- Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision-making of the governing body.
- Ensuring the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles whereby the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, leads in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by elected members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority.
- Developing the capabilities of elected members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the Authority to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political, and environmental changes and risks by ensuring elected members and:
    - Staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged.
    - Officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources, and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensure that they can update their knowledge continuously.

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

The Authority needs to ensure that the organisational and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates the effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes.

Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities. A robust system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.

It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision-making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes, and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires commitment from those in authority.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Managing risk

- Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision-making.
- Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively.
- Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are allocated.

Managing performance

- Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution, and independent post-implementation review.
- Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the Authority's financial, social, and environmental position and outlook.
- Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place, which provides constructive challenge, and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the Authority's performance and that of the fire service, for which it is responsible.
- Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision-making.
- Providing elected members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and progress towards outcome achievement.
- Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post-implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements).

Robust internal control

- Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives.
- Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control regularly.
- Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place.

- Ensuring additional assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor.
- Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group/function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body:
    - Provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment.
    - That its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.

Managing data

- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data.
- Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies.
- Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decision-making and performance monitoring.

Strong public financial management

- Ensuring financial management supports both long-term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.
- Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls.

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

Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned with not only reporting on actions completed but also ensuring that stakeholders can understand and respond as the fire service plans and conducts its activities in a transparent manner. Both internal and external audits contribute to effective accountability.

The Authority will achieve this by:

Implementing good practice in transparency

- Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.
- Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.

Implementing good practices in reporting

- Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way.
- Ensuring elected members and senior management own the results reported.
- Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this framework have been applied and publishing the results of this assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the Annual Governance Statement).
- Ensuring that this framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate.
- Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations.

Assurance and effective accountability

- Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.
- Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to elected members is in place, providing assurance regarding governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon.
- Welcoming peer challenges, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.
- Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.
- Ensuring that when working in partnership, accountability arrangements are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

9. Our Code of Corporate Governance evidence of compliance

The tables below takes each of the good governance principles and sets out the documents, systems and processes that comprise the Authority's governance framework.

The Authority has a broad range of strategies and policies in place, and this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

	Principle A Behaving with integrity	**Principle B** Ensuring openness	**Principle C** Defining outcomes	**Principle D** **Determining** interventions	**Principle E** Developing the Authoritys capacity	**Principle F** Managing risk, performance & finance	**Principle G** Implementing good practices
Constitution: Part 1 Standing Orders	X	X			X		
Constitution: Part 2 Financial Regulations	X	X		X	X	X	
Constitution: Part 3 Delegation Scheme	X	X			X	X	
Constitution: Part 4 Terms of Reference		X			X		
Constitution: Part 5 Codes of Conduct	X	X			X		
Constitution: Part 6 Members Allowance Scheme	X	X			X		
Annual departmental plans			X	X	X	X	X
Annual Equality and Gender Pay Gap report		X		X			X
Annual Governance Statement	X	X				X	X
Annual Report: Our year in review		X		X	X	X	X
Annual Service Operating Plan		X	X	X	X	X	X
Authority and committee timetable and report publication		X		X	X	X	
Budget monitoring/preparation		X	X	X	X	X	
Business continuity management			X		X	X	
Career conversations including arrangements for succession planning			X		X	X	
Capital policy and programme		X	X	X		X	X
Code of Corporate Governance	X	X			X		
Community Risk Management Plan	X	X	X		X	X	
Community Risk Profile		X	X	X		X	
Compliments and complaints policy, procedure, and annual report.	X	X					X
Counter fraud framework and investigations	X	X			X	X	
Declarations of Interest	X	X				X	X
Efficiency Plan			X				

	Principle A Behaving with integrity	**Principle B** Ensuring openness	**Principle C** Defining outcomes	**Principle D** **Determining** interventions	**Principle E** Developing the Authoritys capacity	**Principle F** Managing risk, performance & finance	**Principle G** Implementing good practices
Equality impact assessments	X	X	X	X			X
External audit of accounts, Auditor's Annual Report and V4M opinion	X	X	X			X	X
Freedom of Information Act publication scheme		X					X
Governance Committee	X			X	X	X	X
Health and safety policy, inspections, and reporting			X	X		X	X
HMICFRS inspections and reports	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
HR disciplinary policy	X	X	X			X	X
Induction guidelines/checklist	X				X	X	
Information Management Framework– data, documentation, and security policies	X	X		X		X	X
Internal Audit Plan and Annual Report	X	X		X		X	X
Job descriptions and recruitment	X		X		X		
Medium Term Financial Strategy		X	X	X	X	X	X
Member allowance scheme		X					X
Member induction and development programme	X				X		
Minutes of Fire Authority and Committee meetings	X	X				X	X
Modern Day Slavery Statement	X	X				X	
Narrative Statement		X		X		X	
Occupational Health Unit – employee assistance, health, and wellbeing			X		X		
Partnership register/agreements		X	X	X	X		X
Pay policy statement		X		X			X
Performance and development review (PDR) and career conversations	X				X	X	
Performance management/reporting			X	X	X	X	X
Privacy policy/notice				X		X	
Procurement policy	X	X	X	X			X
Public consultations	X	X				X	X
Programme management office – project planning		X	X	X		X	X
Register of delegated decisions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Register of gifts and interests	X	X				X	X

	Principle A Behaving with integrity	**Principle B** Ensuring openness	**Principle C** Defining outcomes	**Principle D** **Determining** interventions	**Principle E** Developing the Authoritys capacity	**Principle F** Managing risk, performance & finance	**Principle G** Implementing good practices
Reserves policy		X	X	X		X	
Risk management arrangements and the corporate risk register			X	X		X	X
Service planning and improvement plans			X	X		X	
Staff engagement/surveys		X	X		X	X	
Statement of Accounts	X	X	X			X	X
Statement of Assurance	X	X				X	X
Statutory Officer advice	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Strategic Framework for Communications, Engagement and Consultation	X	X		X		X	X
Strategic planning	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Training records	X		X	X	X	X	X
Transparency Code		X					X
Treasury Management Policy	X		X	X			
TWFRS Strategy 2025		X	X		X		
TWFRS 2025 programme		X	X	X	X		
TWFRS website		X					X
Vision, missions, and core values	X	X	X				X
Whistleblowing (confidential reporting) policy	X	X				X	