

MERSEYSIDE FIRE RESCUE AUTHORITY

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Governance is: “the system by which local government directs and controls their functions and relate to their communities.”

1. The general public have a right to expect the highest standards of conduct from its community leaders and institutions. This includes Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority.

2. Three high level principles underpin Corporate Governance:-

- ❖ Openness and inclusivity
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Integrity

The concept of leadership overarches these three fundamental principles.

3. The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework expands the high level principles to define six detailed principles of good governance and this Code of Corporate Governance has been devised by the Fire and Rescue Authority to reflect those six principles, which are:

- (i) Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area
- (ii) Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
- (iii) Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- (iv) Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- (v) Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective
- (vi) Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

This code takes each of these six principals in turn and sets out what the Authority commits itself to do by this Code and how it will do it.

PRINCIPLE 1 – Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Authority’s purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users

Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning

Ensuring that the Authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money.

<u>PRINCIPLE 1 – Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area</u>		
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
1 Develop and promote the Authority’s purpose and vision	Integrated Risk Management Plan, Service Plan, through partnerships	The Authority/ Strategic Management team
2 Review on a regular basis the Authority’s vision for the local area and its impact on the Authority’s governance arrangements	Regular Review of Code Approval by full Authority of governance arrangements	Authority/Monitoring Officer
3 Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties	Partnership Strategy, Protocols and standard agreements provide the framework for all partnerships	All officers and Members involved in partnerships
4 Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the Authority’s activities and achievements, its financial position and performance	Statement of Accounts Service Plan Integrated Risk Management Plan	Strategic Management Team
5 Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured, make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available and implement any appropriate changes taking account of those reviews.	Consultation Strategy For example - After the Incident Questionnaires Surveys Meetings Consultation events	Strategic Management Team

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6	Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery	Complaints procedure Operational Assurance processes and Audits Individual performance and appraisal and discipline policies Promotion of innovation within the Authority Provision of appropriate training for staff	Strategic Management Team
7	Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the Authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	Integrated Risk Management and Service Planning process Authority reporting process Project Management process	Strategic Management Team

PRINCIPLE 2 – Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Authority and being clear about executive and non executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function

Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between Authority Members and officers and that the responsibilities of Authority Members and officers are carried out to a high standard

Ensuring relationships between the Authority and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.

PRINCIPLE 2 – Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles		
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
1 Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the Authority's approach towards putting this into practice	The Authority does not have an Executive structure but roles and responsibilities are set out in: Constitution Procedural Standing Orders Role Maps Job Descriptions	Authority/Strategic Management Team
2 set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other Authority Members, Members generally and senior officers		
3 Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required	The Authority reviews and approves a Scheme of Delegation to committees and officers each year at its annual general meeting, and at other times as and when required, which includes a list of those matters reserved for the decision of the full Authority. Procedural Standing Orders detail the terms of reference of each Committee of the Authority that are delegated to those committees, subject to the ability to lift delegation by a majority vote.	Authority

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<p>Make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the Authority for all aspects of operational management</p>	<p>In the case of the Fire and Rescue Authority this refers to the Chief Fire Officer.</p> <p>This takes place through: Procedural Standing Orders Delegated Powers Job Description Conditions of Employment</p>	<p>Authority/Chief Fire Officer</p>
<p>4 Develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained</p>	<p>Communication takes place regularly between the CFO, Chair and other Group Leaders on the Authority. This includes regular Leaders' Briefings and Authority Pre meetings The Authority has also approved a protocol for staff and Member relations which sets out the respective roles and the way in which they interact</p>	<p>Chief Fire Officer/Political Group Leaders</p>
<p>5. Make a senior officer (usually the S151 Officer) responsible to the Authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control</p>	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive is appointed as the officer having responsibility for the Authority's financial affairs under s.73 of the Local Government Act 1985. Responsibility is recorded via: Procedural Standing Orders Financial Regulations Job Description Scheme of Delegation Budget papers and reports</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive</p>
<p>6. Make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with</p>	<p>The Director of Legal Services is appointed as the Monitoring Officer and is responsible to the Authority for ensuring that all applicable law is complied with. Responsibility is recorded via: Procedural Standing Orders Job Description Scheme of Delegation The role of the Monitoring Officer as approved by the Authority</p>	<p>Director of Legal Services</p>

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<p>7. Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles.</p>	<p>Procedural Standing Orders Scheme of Delegation Protocol for Staff and Member Relations Member Champions appointments and procedure Seminars and training events.</p>	<p>Authority/Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>8. Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable)</p> <p>Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery</p> <p>Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all Members of the Authority together with the terms of their remuneration and its review are defined clearly in writing.</p>	<p>Members Allowances are set out in the Members Allowances scheme which is approved by the Authority, taking into account recommendations of the Standards Committee which includes independent members, and the recommendations of the independent remuneration panels of the constituent district councils.</p> <p>Officers' remuneration is determined by the Authority, where appropriate, taking into account independent reviews. Also where appropriate, this incorporates national collective bargaining arrangements and is subject to job evaluation reviews and equal pay audits. Remuneration is set out in employees' contracts.</p> <p>Service Delivery is monitored through a performance management framework, in particular through the Service Plan.</p> <p>The Constitution, Approved Roles and Responsibilities of Members, Member Champion Roles, Members Allowance Scheme detail these roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Authority/ Strategic Management Team</p>

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<p>9. Ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated</p>	<p>Plans are developed through integrated processes and approved by the Authority following consultation:</p> <p>Integrated Risk Management Plan Service Plan Financial Plans Equality and Diversity Plans</p> <p>Communication, consultation and dissemination is through a variety of means including the website, printed documents and consultative forums.</p>	<p>Authority/ Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>10. When working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority</p> <p>When working in partnership ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership</p> <p>Ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.</p>	<p>There are approved strategies and protocols for partnership working. A guidance document is issued to Members on their role and responsibilities on outside bodies</p> <p>Information sharing protocols are used.</p> <p>Legal, risk management, financial and procurement advice and guidance is available to all officers establishing a partnership.</p>	<p>Authority/ Strategic Management Team and all officers and Members working in partnerships</p>

PRINCIPLE 3 – Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

Ensuring Authority Members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance

Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

<u>PRINCIPLE 3 – Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour</u>		
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
1 Ensure that the Authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect	<p>Officers and Members communicate effectively and openly and work together towards the achievement of the Authority's Vision.</p> <p>Committee agendas and reports are sent to all Members and Representative Bodies and all are invited to attend.</p> <p>The Chief Fire Officer carried out Leaders' briefing sessions.</p> <p>Extensive information is published on the Authority's Internet and Intranet sites and on Public Folders in the Authority's management information system.</p> <p>The Authority has in place consultation and negotiation procedures and local Joint Secretaries arrangements.</p>	Authority/ Strategic Management Team

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<p>2 Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols</p>	<p>A Code of Conduct for Members is approved by the Authority and a Standards Committee is in place to deal with relevant issues referred to it by the Standards Board.</p> <p>A Code of Conduct for staff is also in place together with relevant policies (such as Bullying and Harassment). Performance Appraisal and discipline procedures are also in place for officers.</p> <p>Complaints, Anti Fraud and Corruption, Confidential Reporting policies and a Member/Staff Relations protocol are in place.</p>	<p>Authority/ Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>3 Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice</p>	<p>Codes of Conduct, Procedural, Contract and Financial Standing Orders set out the requirements.</p> <p>At the commencement of Authority meetings Members are asked whether they have any interests to declare.</p> <p>Registers of gifts, hospitality and Members' and Officers' interests are maintained, reviewed and reported on to the Standards Committee. Reminders of the need to make disclosures are issued to all staff and Members.</p> <p>Guidance on Member's interests is issued to Members annually, and training is provided.</p>	<p>Standards Committee/Monitoring Officer</p>

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<p>4 Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners</p>	<p>Codes of Conduct and associated policies (such as bullying and harassment and equalities) cover Members and Officers. People & Organisational Development Directorate instils the Authority's values through the Service and outward facing and internal documents reiterate these values.</p>	<p>Authority/Strategic Management Team/Director of POD</p>
<p>5 Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice</p>	<p>The Authority's code of corporate governance is subject to regular review and seeks to comply with CIPFA/Solace frameworks. The Authority reconsiders its structure, scheme of delegation, powers and duties of committees and other documents as part of its annual meeting. An annual governance statement will be produced from 2008 onwards to replace the existing Statement of Internal Control which seeks to comply with relevant ethical standards. Procedural, Financial and Contract Standing Orders address the way in which the Authority's business is conducted.</p>	<p>Authority/ Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>6 Develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee</p>	<p>A Standards Committee including three Independent Members (one of which is the Chair of the Committee) is established. It has terms of reference, meets regularly, makes recommendations in respect of the Code of Conduct, Members allowances, Member training and development and reviews matters such as the register of interests and register of gifts and hospitality. It also has procedures in place for dealing with allegations against Members.</p>	<p>Authority/Monitoring Officer/Standards Committee</p>

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7	Use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority	Equality policies and strategies are approved and the delivery of objectives is actively monitored and managed by the Authority. Decision making is supported by the inclusion of equality impact assessments as required. Ethical Procurement is a cornerstone of the Procurement process	Authority/ Strategic Management Team/managers
8	In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.	Protocols for partnership working address our equality and diversity standards and ethical procurement considerations as well as our Mission.	All officers and Members working in partnerships

PRINCIPLE 4 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny

Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs

Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place

Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area

PRINCIPLE 4 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk		
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
1 Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible	<p>The Fire and Rescue Authority is not required to have a Scrutiny Committee as it does not operate with an Executive.</p> <p>However the Authority has established four scrutiny panels to mirror its main committees that can scrutinise decisions and review service performance.</p> <p>All draft committee reports are examined by the Strategic Management Group before submission to Committee. Agendas and reports are sent to all Members and Representative Bodies, who are all invited to attend every Committee meeting and offer challenge during the decision making process.</p> <p>The Leadership Board is also open to all Members. It considers forthcoming issues prior to Committee and Authority meetings and agendas and papers are sent to all Members.</p> <p>The Authority appoints a Member with responsibility for answering questions in each of the constituent district councils on the discharge of the Authority's functions and each district council is able to replace its appointed Members if it so wishes.</p>	Authority/ Strategic Management Group/ Leadership Board/ Scrutiny Panels/ All Members

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		Leaders of constituent district councils and representative bodies are invited to Members' Strategy Days to consider matters such as Authority budget options.	
2	Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based	Minutes record the decisions taken. Reports contain all the supporting evidence and unless Exempt are available via the website. Meetings are recorded and the recordings are available on request following any meeting (excluding exempt items). Full written reasons for decisions are provided in appropriate cases such as disciplinary or pension matters.	Monitoring Officer/Democratic Services
3	Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice	The Members' and Officers' Codes of Conduct address these issues. The Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee monitors these in practice. Declarations of Members' interests are a standard item at the commencement of committee meetings. Reminders to staff regarding disclosure are issued from time to time.	Monitoring Officer/Standards Committee
4	Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee	The Audit & VFM Scrutiny Panel performs the role of Audit Committee.	Audit & VFM Scrutiny Panel Committee/Deputy Chief Executive
5	Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints	The Complaints Procedure and Confidential Reporting Procedure are agreed, available via the website and publicised to staff, Members and contractors.	Monitoring Officer

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<p>6 Ensure that those making decisions, whether for the Authority or the partnership, are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications</p>	<p>Induction and further training and development such as seminars, provision of Member's information packs, bulletins and Strategy Days ensure Members have up to date information.</p> <p>Committee and Authority reports contain full details and supporting papers on which decisions can be based</p> <p>Leaders' and Chairs' briefings support the above immediately prior to meetings.</p> <p>All Members have unrestricted access to officers to obtain any additional information that they require.</p> <p>Partnership strategies and protocols encompass issues relating to partnerships.</p>	<p>Strategic Management Group/ Committee Services</p>
<p>7 Ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately</p>	<p>All Committee and Authority reports contain sections on financial implications and value for money. Legal implications are contained within the body of every report as appropriate.</p> <p>The Treasurer and Monitoring Officer examine all reports to Management Board and the Authority and its committees to enable legal and financial implications to be considered and provision included where appropriate</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer and Treasurer are available prior to and at every meeting to respond to questions on these matters</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer and Deputy Chief Executive</p>

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<p>8</p> <p>Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs</p>	<p>Risk management is a standing item on Strategic Management Team agendas. There is a Member Sponsor for Risk Management. The Corporate Risk Register is updated whenever a change or new risk is identified. Risk management is an integral part of the project management process. Risk management is reported to Audit & VFM Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>Operational risk management is a fundamental aspect of the business of the Authority.</p> <p>Risk Management is integrated into relevant policies eg the Health and Safety policy. Staff are required to comply with Authority policies.</p>	<p>Policy and Finance Committee/Risk Management Group</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Ensure that arrangements are in place for whistle-blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the Authority have access</p> <p>Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities</p> <p>Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law</p>	<p>A Confidential Reporting Policy sets out how to make a “whistle-blowing” complaint. This has been publicised to staff and through the procurement process</p> <p>Procedural Standing Orders and the advice and guidance of the Monitoring Officer are available to the Authority at all times.</p> <p>The Authority strives to use its powers to the full benefit of the community, for example, through its Youth Engagement strategies and river rescue provision.</p> <p>Committee and Authority reports clearly set out the legal limitations and opportunities presented by specific legislation and general responsibilities</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Authority/Monitoring Officer</p>

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<p>10 Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into their procedures and decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Processes and policies are in place to enable the Authority to meet legal requirements. They include: Procedures for the conduct of meetings which ensure that natural justice is met (eg in respect of discipline cases and appeal processes), Consultation and consideration of representations prior to reaching relevant decisions, Provision of legal advice at all appropriate stages to enable relevant matters to be taken into account and irrelevant matters to be excluded, Provision of written reasons for decisions in appropriate cases and Avenues of appeal to the Appeals Committee comprised of different Members where appropriate</p>	
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PRINCIPLE 5 – Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles

Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as individuals and as a group

Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individual's skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal

PRINCIPLE 5 – Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective		
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
<p>1 Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis</p>	<p>Training and Development Strategies exist for Members and Officers: These include induction programmes Seminars Formal training Informal training Mentoring The Sponsor Process A Training Liaison Group of Members influences this strategy</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Committee Services/ Training Liaison Group</p>
<p>2 Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Authority</p> <p>Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively</p>	<p>The statutory officers are full members of the Executive Leadership Team Job descriptions specify skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications</p> <p>Members and officers have training and development strategies. One-to-ones and appraisals assess individual training and development needs.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer/Deputy Chief Executive</p> <p>People and Organisational Development/ Committee Services/ Training Liaison Group</p>

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<p>3 Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinize and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed</p>	<p>The Members' Training and Development Strategy reflects generic issues regarding their role as a member but as much of this development is provided by their "home" authority the intention is not to duplicate and the major part of the development provided by this Authority relates directly to Fire and Rescue Authority business</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Committee Services/ Training Liaison Group</p>
<p>4 Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs</p>	<p>The Executive is not applicable in this case. Individual Members attend a one-to-one interview every two years to consider training and development requirements and arrangements put in place to give effect to any needs identified in line with the Authority's Members Learning and Development Strategy. Where constituent district councils are dissatisfied with the performance of Members appointed to the Authority by them they are able to terminate their appointment and appoint replacement Members. District councils will also have a scrutiny role in respect of some aspects of Authority functions. Members are also ultimately accountable to the electorate.</p>	<p>People and Organisational Development/ Committee Services/ Training Liaison Group</p>
<p>5 Ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority</p>	<p>The Authority's Consultation and Communications Strategies include Community Forums</p> <p>The Fire Support Network charity works with the Authority (through a Service Level Agreement) to engage volunteers in the work of the Fire and Rescue Service</p> <p>Other partnership arrangements facilitate a wide variety of external organisations working with the Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>Advocates are employed to engage with hard to reach sections of the community.</p>	<p>Authority/Community Safety Committee/Strategic Management Team</p>

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<p>6 Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development</p>	<p>Succession planning is in place for Members and Officers linked to the respective Training and Development Strategies. An integrated development system and assessment and development centres are in place to enable staff to fully develop their careers.</p>	<p>Authority/People and Organisational Development</p>
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PRINCIPLE 6 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships

Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the Authority, in partnership or by commissioning

Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

PRINCIPLE 6 - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability		
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Commits itself to	How the Authority will do this	Responsible Committee/Officers
1 Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what. Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required	The Integrated Risk Management Plan and Community Safety Plan arrangements with district councils all set out accountability and effectiveness of relationships.	Authority/Strategic Management Team
2 Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function	This is not applicable to the Authority as it does not operate executive arrangements with a scrutiny function.	
3 Ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively	The Communications and Consultation Strategies include: Community Forums Web based multi-lingual surveys Telephone surveys Postal surveys Community Safety Advocates engage with hard to reach and at risk communities. Communication with staff on employee relations matters takes place through Joint Secretaries Committee	Authority/Strategic Management Team

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<p>4 Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the Authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands</p>	<p>See the above section</p>	<p>Authority/Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>5 Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality</p>	<p>All Authority meetings are public meetings. Occasionally, specific items will be exempt and require the exclusion of press and public. These are kept to a minimum.</p>	<p>Authority/Monitoring Officer</p>
<p>6 Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result</p>	<p>The Consultation and Communications Strategies detail the variety of ways in which the Authority communicates and engages with the community and stakeholders. Comments regarding proposals and issues are fed back through public meetings, the web site, email and letter. Changes made to proposals as a result are made through the Authority/ Committee reporting process</p>	<p>Authority/Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>7 On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the Authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period</p>	<p>The annual Service Plan incorporates all these aspects and is published via the website and in hard copy.</p>	<p>Authority/Strategic Management Team</p>
<p>8 Ensure that the Authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so</p>	<p>All Authority reports and minutes are published in the website prior to meetings and are circulated widely to partners and stakeholders</p>	<p>Authority/Committee Services</p>

<p>9 Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making</p>	<p>Staff consultation is well established through the local joint secretaries and the consultation and negotiation panel, with additional communication and consultation taking place through the Consultation and Communications Strategies</p>	<p>Authority/Strategic Management Team</p>
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