

DORSET POLICE AUTHORITY – 12 FEBRUARY 2010

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek members' approval to a revised Dorset Police authority Code of Corporate Governance.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In December 2008 the Authority approved a Code of Corporate Governance in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) framework for delivering good governance in local government. Under the arrangements approved by the Authority, the Code is published on the Authority's website and reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with the preparation of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.2 The CIPFA framework defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government body and encourages the following three stages to be followed for a local authority to test their governance arrangements:
- (a) A review of their existing governance arrangements against the framework
 - (b) The development and maintenance of an up to date local code of governance
 - (c) The preparation of an annual governance statement to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own code.

2. REVISED CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- 2.1 The Annual Governance Statement is published annually as part of the Authority's annual accounts following a review of compliance against the CIPFA framework by a joint working group comprising the Force, Authority and the Internal Auditor. In conjunction with the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, there is now a need to ensure that relevant revisions to the 2008/09 Annual Governance Statement are reflected in the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance.
- 2.2 Relevant amendments are detailed in the revised version of the Code of Corporate Governance attached at Appendix A, with changes marked in blue. Subject to members' approval the revised Code will be published on the Authority's website.

3. POTENTIAL FUTURE CHANGES TO THE CODE

- 3.1 A number of current Government proposals have the potential to impact on the Annual Governance Statement and our Code of Corporate Governance in the future. These include, for example, proposals for an enhanced role for Authorities in respect of police complaints and for enhanced provisions in respect of obtaining the views of local people on policing. We will also be reviewing the potential impact on the Statement and Code of the Police Authority inspection framework.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance is by necessity a dynamic Code that needs to be developed and maintained to ensure that it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The Code will continue to be brought back to members annually for review in conjunction with the preparation of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are asked to approve the revised Dorset Police Authority Code of Corporate Governance.

M J GOSCOMB
Chief Executive

Any members' queries to Martin Goscomb on (01202 or 01305) 223966



CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Governance is about how a Police Authority ensures it is doing the right thing, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open and accountable way. It comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which police authorities are directed and controlled, and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities. Good governance leads to good management, good performance, and good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and ultimately good outcomes for citizens and users.

This Code of Corporate Governance describes how Dorset Police Authority discharges its governance responsibilities with particular regard to its two overarching statutory responsibilities to secure an efficient and effective local police service, and to hold the Chief Constable to account for the exercise of his functions and those of persons under his direction and control.

It is to be noted that in policing, there is an important distinction between the Chief Constable who is responsible for the control, direction and delivery of operational policing services in Dorset, and the Police Authority which is responsible for maintaining an efficient and effective police service for the County.

In discharging its governance responsibilities, Dorset Police Authority is committed to upholding the six core principles developed by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services and the six core principles lie at the heart of this Code of Corporate Governance. A framework has therefore been formulated locally which ensures that these core principles are fully integrated into the conduct of the Authority's business and includes the means to demonstrate compliance. This framework involves an Annual Governance Review and the preparation and publication of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The AGS forms part of the Authority's Annual Accounts and reports publicly on how our governance arrangements comply with our Code of Corporate Governance, how we have monitored their effectiveness and what changes are planned.

This Code of Corporate Governance will be reviewed and updated annually in the light of the Annual Governance Review and the publication of the Annual Governance Statement.

- 1. To focus on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area the Authority will:**
 - Ensure effective arrangements for consulting local communities about policing and for reflecting those views in local policing priorities and targets.
 - Ensure effective arrangements are in place to develop Strategic and Capability Assessments that determine the policing priorities and the Force's capability to deliver them.
 - [Ensure the production of Three Year and Annual Policing Plan and a Medium Term Strategic Plan setting out our vision and the agreed strategic and operational priorities and targets, including reference to the Policing Pledge.](#)
 - Set the budget and agree the policing council tax precept.

- Ensure the effective communication of the Policing Plan and Budget, for example through the publication of the precept leaflet, 'Safer Dorset' and the Authority's website and also through member attendance at Force Policing Plan launch events.
 - Ensure arrangements for the oversight and scrutiny of performance and user satisfaction levels and provide information on performance to local communities.
 - Ensure effective monitoring arrangements of the Force Finance Strategy, Annual Budget, Human Resource Plans, Asset Management Plans, Procurement and Commissioning arrangements, and Efficiency and Productivity plans are in place.
 - Monitor the Force's continuous improvement activity, internal and external inspection and the management of complaints.
 - Adopt a strong partnership philosophy and secure arrangements for the Force to develop complementary priorities and plans to those of partner agencies and to collaborate with other police forces in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness.
- 2. To ensure members and officers work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles the Authority will:**
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of members and senior officers in the Authority and the Force within the Annual Policing Plan, Key Policy documents and on the Force Website.
 - Adopt a clearly defined committee structure that provides strategic direction for the Force and robust oversight arrangements by the Authority.
 - Annually review the terms of reference and committee membership.
 - Update, approve and publish a members' allowance scheme annually.
 - Develop, maintain and regularly review policies, procedural standing orders and financial regulations.
 - Approve and keep updated a scheme of delegation.
 - Develop a clear partnership policy clearly defining the legal status, decision making powers and terms of reference for all partnerships.
- 3. To promote values for the authority and demonstrate the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour the Authority will:**
- Ensure all new members sign up to a Code of Conduct as part of their acceptance of office and agree to uphold the ten general principles of public life.
 - Establish a Standards Committee chaired by an Independent Member for standards that meets quarterly and has a responsibility to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to manage the complaints procedure.
 - Maintain a register of business interests and a gifts and hospitality register.
 - Ensure that relevant staff policies and arrangements are in place, for example in respect of vetting, standards of dress/appearance, discipline, dignity at work and grievances, alcohol and substance misuse policy and data protection/computer standards and similar policies.

4. To take informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk the Authority will:

- Ensure effective corporate risk management arrangements are in place with clearly defined policy, roles and responsibilities and scrutiny arrangements, including the introduction and maintenance of a Police Authority risk register within the organisation's wider corporate risk register.
- Adopt open decision-making processes through advance publication of committee reports and ensuring meetings are open to the public, subject to the need to preserve confidentiality.
- Adopt clear procedural standards for meetings. Aim to provide access to full, accurate and clear information on all of its activities.
- Establish an effective internal control framework in relation to Force and Authority decision-making procedures, performance and service delivery and financial management.
- Ensure professional staff are appointed in key governance posts.
- Establish a clear structure of reporting and, where possible, publishing the findings of internal and external audit, inspection and review with a view to enhancing performance.

5. To develop the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective the Authority will:

- Adopt robust competency based recruitment processes for Independent Members, Officers and Volunteers attract high quality candidates for selection.
- Ensure effective induction procedures for new members, officers and volunteers.
- Arrange a minimum of two annual seminars to develop member knowledge and awareness.
- Identify lead members to represent the authority's interests and build particular expertise for the Authority.
- Provide a structure of induction, training and development for all members, staff and volunteers.
- Annually review the contribution and training requirements of all members, officers and volunteers.
- Arrange a structure of member's attendance at Force strategic boards to build knowledge and expertise.

6. To engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability the Authority will.

- Maintain a Community Engagement and Communications Committee to promote and ensure that effective community consultation and engagement arrangements are in place.
- Develop and keep updated a community consultation and engagement policy.
- As a statutory member of the partnership, work to develop and deliver the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership plans in accordance with the annual policing plan.
- Attend community engagement and partnership meetings and maintain and publish a programme of community engagement events.

- Operate a protocol for member involvement within the Safer Neighbourhood structure to enable members to hear first hand about the issues that are most important to local people and also to gain assurance about the effectiveness of the Force's Neighbourhood Policing arrangements.
- Engage with Independent Advisory Groups and others that have a role to represent the views of minority groups.