



## **Scope of Responsibility**

The Leader of the Council (Cllr Peter Lamb) and the Chief Executive (Natalie Brahma-

## **The Principles of Good Governance**

defines the various principles of good governance in the public sector. The new Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework applies to the Annual Governance Statement prepared for the year ended 31 March 2022 and up to the date of the approval

The Monitoring Officer ensures the

## **Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption**

The Council is committed to protecting any funds and property to which it has been entrusted and expects the highest standards of conduct from Councillors and officers regarding the administration of financial affairs. The [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#) was updated in March 2022 (a draft is on the intranet/website for staff, Councillors and the public) and will be signed off by [Cabinet](#) in July 2022.

The Council has a Fraud and Investigations Team which acts to minimise the risk of fraud, bribery, corruption and dishonesty and recommends procedures for dealing with actual or expected fraud. The Team also prosecutes, where appropriate, and is involved in fraud training and awareness.

## **Principle 2: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

### **Transparency**

The Council and its decisions are open and accessible to the community, service users, partners and its staff. All reports requiring a decision are considered by appropriately qualified Legal, and Finance staff with expertise in the particular function area before they are progressed to the relevant Committee or group. This Council wants to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in decision-making and applied to everything the Council does. To meet this responsibility, equality impact assessments are carried out when there is significant change to major Council services, functions, projects and policies in order to better understand whether the change will impact people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

All reports and details of decisions made can be found on the [website](#).

### **Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Requests**

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004 give anyone the right to ask for information held by a public authority, which includes this Council. This is subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality and in the application of certain exemptions and exceptions which may be engaged where it is proper and appropriate to do so. The Council responds to such requests in a timely and impartial manner and in line with the legislation. The Council also proactively publish information on our website as part of the [Publication Scheme](#).

### **Subject Access Requests**

Section 7 of the Data Protection Act provides for individuals to obtain a copy of information that an organisation holds about them upon making a written request.

### **Engagement and Communication**

Crawley Borough Council recognises that stakeholders require information about decisions that are being taken locally, and how public money is being spent in order to hold the Council to account for the services it provides.

and engagement.

The Council held its annual [Question Time on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022](#), which gave residents the opportunity to ask questions about topics important to them. The panel included representatives from Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, Crawley Clinical Commissioning Group and Crawley Young. This meeting was held at Crawley College.

## **Consultations**

The Council publishes Forthcoming Decision Notices for planned consultations and future decisions. Internally, a consultation toolkit has been developed to guide Council staff through the consultation process. The agreed process ensures that engagement activity is relevant, accessible, transparent and responsive. To increase awareness, consultations are proactively promoted.

## **Complaints**

Crawley Borough Council is committed to delivering a high-quality service and aims to achieve the highest possible standards but recognises that, despite its best intentions and hard work, things can go wrong.

When there is service failure or users are unhappy about the way a matter has been handled, the Council openly wants to hear about such experiences and operates a two stage complaints system as part of its Complaints Policy. Stage 1 is where the complaint is dealt with locally by the relevant service area. If the complainant continues to remain dissatisfied with the Stage 1 response, a request can be made for a further review, conducted by a senior officer, normally the Head of Service as a Stage 2 complaint.

If the matter is still not resolved to their satisfaction, the complainant is entitled to take the matter up with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman who deals with any complaints that relate to the housing managed service.

data is reported to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) on a quarterly basis and includes data on volumes received and reasons for those that are late.

Lessons learned for upheld and part upheld complaints is also reported to CMT to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery. In addition data is reported at a service level on a monthly basis to ensure action is taken to address any areas of concern.

An audit of the Corporate Complaints Policy was undertaken in May 2021 and limited assurance 61842.52 reW\*nBT/F2 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 444.34 474.31 Tm0 g0 G[ )]TJET.(q0.000008882 0 59

**Principle 3: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**

**Corporate Priorities**

The [Corporate Priorities](#) of the Council for the period 2018-2022 are as follows:

- Delivering value for Money and modernising the way we work
- Delivering affordable homes for Crawley and reducing homelessness
- Improving job opportunities and developing the local Economy
- Creating stronger communities
- Providing high quality leisure and culture facilities and supporting health and wellbeing services
- Protecting the environment

The Corporate Priorities will be reviewed and updated after the elections in May.

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## **Financial Controls**

Financial reports comparing budget to actual and projections to end of year are available in real time to all key officers, with access/drilldown facilities appropriate to role and responsibilities. The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet also receive quarterly Budget Monitoring Reports. All Councillor financial seminars have taken place twice during the year to keep Councillors updated on the financial situation due to COVID-19 and the impact on future budgets.

## **Local Plan**

The [Local Plan](#) [Crawley 2030](#), was adopted in December 2015 and now forms the plan under which development control decisions will be taken. The Local Plan is supported by a number of companion planning documents and considerations including Supplementary Planning Documents, Development Briefs, Article 4 Directions and the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and associated Infr



options to improve services and create efficiencies.

5. Commercialisation and Income Generation: To create a culture of commercialisation and embedding the principles of its PIPES strategy.
6. most efficient and effective way.

There is a separate Assets Review Group that monitors the key commercial and investment properties, this Group is chaired by the Chief Executive and meets monthly.

### **Housing Strategy**

Housing need and the policies to address this are contained within the Local Plan Housing policies.

[Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy \(2019 - 2024\)](#) was approved by the Full Council on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

The Council has identified five priorities for addressing homelessness within Crawley:

- Preventing and relieving homelessness
- Tackling rough sleeping
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable people
- Accessing suitable and affordable accommodation
- Preventing repeat homelessness.

### **Procurement Strategy**

The Council operates a shared Procurement Service with Horsham, Mid Sussex and Mole Valley Councils, with Crawley acting as the lead Authority. Procurement

relevant public procurement regulations. These govern the way officers acquire goods, works and services, and ensure that Council processes are consistent, transparent, legally compliant, and that suppliers are treated fairly.

Depending on the type of contract being procured, suppliers may be asked as part of their bid to commit to the principles of a relevant charter or policy. Crawley has a Sustainable Procurement Charter, Unite Construction Charter and Social Value

2021the Council agreed to amend the targets within its pledge to reduce emissions by at least 50%, as close to net zero as possible by 2030, and to reach net zero by 2040 at the very latest.

Details of current activities are available on the Council website. [Climate emergency | Crawley GOV.](#)

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

The Council last updated its [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement in 2017/18](#). A review of the Statement and Action Plan commenced in January 2022 and has considered the latest information under the Equality Act 2010. A revised Statement and Action Plan has been drafted which supports delivery of the three priorities the Council has identified as being important to meet its duty under the Equality Act. These are:

### **Priority 1: Our Organisation**

***Developing and building a diverse and***

## Local Partnerships

The Council has a key role in a number of local partnerships, working for the benefit of residents and the community to improve the quality of life, including:

Safer Crawley Partnership - formed in 1998 in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Crawley Wellbeing - a free, friendly and impartial service from the Local Authority, run in partnership with West Sussex County Council and the local NHS.

Economic Partnerships, LEAG, Crawley Growth Programme, Crawley Economic Recovery Taskforce/Towns Fund Board.

The Local Community Network (LCN) is a place-based approach to health and wellbeing delivery and aims to share plans, resources and priorities in tackling local, evidenced based, health inequalities. Membership includes colleagues from primary care, NHS, public health, the Local Authority and voluntary sector, using the Borough Council as the health anchor organisation to deliver the Crawley Health Programme.

The Council is also a statutory member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Safer West Sussex Partnership, West Sussex Prevent Board, Westre plans, resources

## Consultations

To be effective this policy aims to inspire and support a genuine two-way dialogue with all sections of the community and other stakeholders. There are a number of ways people can get involved and connect with the Council. Local people have the option to engage in a dialogue through social media sites (including Facebook and twitter), petition schemes, neighbourhood forums, Council meetings (open to the public), their local Councillor and annual Crawley Question Time.

Internally, a Statement of Community Involvement has been developed to guide Council staff through the consultation process. The agreed process ensures that engagement activity is relevant, accessible, transparent and responsive. To increase awareness and participation, consultations are proactively promoted via publications (printed and digital), press releases, social media, email, town notice boards and the Council website. [Crawley Live](#), a Council publication, is published quarterly and sent to every household in Crawley to keep residents informed. It is also available online on the

Various methods are used (depending on the scope of the

All new staff attend

also be consulted by the Cabinet or the Full Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

### **Financial Management**

The Head of Corporate Finance (S151 Officer) is responsible for leading the promotion and delivery of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times, ensuring that budgets are agreed in advance and are robust, that value for money is provided by our services, and that the finance function is fit for purpose. They provide advice on financial matters to both the Cabinet and the Full Council and is actively involved in ensuring that the Authority's strategic objectives are delivered sustainably in line with long term financial goals. The Head of Corporate Finance, together with the Finance team, ensure that new policies or service proposals are costed, financially appraised, fully financed and identifies the key assumptions and financial risks that face the Council.

### **Risk Management**

All significant (strategic) risks are discussed regularly by CMT and are reported to the Audit2/F2 11.g0 g0 G[ )TJETQq0.000008882 0 596.04 842.52 reW\*nBT/F2 11tv the Council.

pressures and the need to divert internal audit resources to the rents issue as identified below.

The Audit and Risk Manager/SIAP provides an independent and objective annual opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, risk management, and governance each year. This is carried out by the Internal Audit team/SIAP in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Progress on the Audit Plan is reported to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

### **Audit Committee**

The role of the Audit Committee is to review and assess the adequacy of the internal audit and risk management arrangements. This Committee meets quarterly and receives the reports from the Audit and Risk Manager/SIAP, including their progress reports and Annual Report. This Committee considers and comments upon the Internal Audit Plan, ensures the Audit and Risk functions are fulfilled and reviews the effectiveness

### **Governance Committee**

The Governance Committee deals with Constitutional matters, the Conduct of Councillors, Political Management Arrangements, and Corporate Governance, -Executive functions not specifically delegated to another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council. This Committee specifically monitors and reviews the Corporate Governance of the Council including

### **Annual Accounts**

The Council publishes full audited accounts each year, which are also published on the [Statement of accounts | Crawley GOV](#)

### **Review of Effectiveness**

Crawley Borough Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of CMT, who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Governance, People & Performance Annual Report, and also by comments made by relevant stakeholders, the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

### **Crawley Homes Rent**

Tenants have paid the rent they would have signed up to pay as part of their Tenancy Agreement, but that rent level was set higher than it ought to have been. Given that rents have been set as part of a valid Tenancy Agreement and that all subsequent actions have been taken in line with that Tenancy Agreement, the Council has acted legally throughout.

A [report](#) to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 22 November 2021 and Cabinet on 24 November 2021 gave the background and actions to the historic overcharge to HRA rents.



