



# **TOWER HAMLETS CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

July 2021

## **Foreword**

From Will Tuckley, Chief Executive

This Code of Corporate Governance sets out the commitment of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to work to uphold the highest possible standards of good governance. This is essential for ensuring we conduct our business in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is properly accounted for.

The Code of Corporate Governance is an important tool in showing our residents how the Council aspires to follow good practice to achieve the best outcomes we can for them.

The Code will be regularly reviewed to match our evolving corporate strategies and policies. Where our practice is found to have fallen short the annual review will identify this and the action necessary to put this right. Our Audit Committee has oversight for making sure that we are following the commitments in this document in order to deliver the highest standards of governance for our residents.

## Introduction

Good governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the communities it serves, with particular regard to being open, inclusive and accountable.

### Our Commitment

Tower Hamlets are committed to upholding the highest standards of good corporate governance.

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate cost-effective services. This Code of Corporate Governance is based on the following principles recommended by CIPFA/SOLACE in a joint document entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' which builds on the seven Principles for the Conduct of Individuals in Public Life.

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

This document describes how the Council achieves the seven principles of good governance and describes how the Council's corporate governance arrangements will be monitored and reviewed. The effectiveness of the policies and procedures set out are evaluated as part of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). All local authorities are required to report publicly about how they have met their governance arrangements and do so through an AGS. [The latest AGS was published in July 2020](#). It confirmed that the Council had adequate governance arrangements in place but set out a number of areas requiring significant improvement. The Council has agreed an action plan in relation to those actions [which has been presented to the Audit Committee](#).

## Applying the Seven Core Principles

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

### **Supporting principles:**

- A1 Behaving with Integrity
- A2 Demonstrating Strong commitment to ethical values
- A3 Respecting the Rule of Law

### **The Council supports Principles A1 to A3 in the following ways:**

- The Council's constitution sets out the rules under which the organisation must operate. This includes ensuring decisions are taken appropriately, by the correct body and with all relevant information presented.
- Section 24 of the Constitution sets out the role of the Monitoring Officer. The Divisional Director – Legal currently has this assigned role. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for dealing with many issues relating to integrity in decision making including around the work of the Standards (Advisory) Committee and Member Conduct.
- The Strategic Plan is the main strategic business planning document of the council. It sets out the corporate priorities and outcomes, the high-level activities that the Council will undertake to deliver the outcomes, as well as the measures that will help us determine whether we are achieving the outcomes. The Strategic Plan outlines the Council's approach to tackling inequality and improving outcomes for residents and has tackling inequality at its core outlining the priorities and outcomes for reducing inequality and need in the borough.
- The Tower Hamlets Plan is the over-arching plan for the borough's local strategic partnership. Partners wanted to work together to identify creative and innovative new ways of delivering effective and efficient services and providing strategic leadership on complex, cross-cutting issues.
- There is a whistleblowing policy and it can be found on the intranet (The Bridge). It provides a route for officers to bring to the monitoring officers attention areas of malpractice.

- Reports and decisions of the Executive (Mayor and Cabinet) are routinely published online to ensure transparency and Executive decisions are subject to the 'Call-In' process by backbench Councillors who have the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have.
- There are Register of Interests (for officers and Members) and the requirement to declare interests at meetings. This includes the need to leave the meeting when any items for which they have a Pecuniary Interest are discussed.
- Likewise, the Gifts and Hospitalities register ensures that Members, co-optees and officers declare any relations with outside people or bodies that could be an issue.
- The Member Induction and Member Development Programmes ensure Members are aware of their responsibilities around good decision making and behaving with integrity. This programme includes committee specific training where required. Further training around the scrutiny function is currently being developed.
- Raising Awareness of Information Governance Regulations and Obligations as set out in the Council's procedures and framework.
- Promoting TOWER values which are important because they shape the culture and standards of the organisation.
- The Council's Legal Services are tasked with ensuring Council decision making is not ultra vires and follows relevant regulations and legal processes as required.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principles A1 to A3:**

- The Council's Constitution including sections on:
  - Officer code of conduct
  - Member code of conduct
  - Member Officer Relations Protocol
  - Scheme of Delegation
- Register of Interests and Declarations at Meetings
- Gifts and Hospitality Registers
- Cabinet, Council and Committee reports online
- Member Induction and Development Programme
- Strategic Plan
- Tower Hamlets Plan

- Borough Equality Assessment
- Equality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Corporate and Statutory Complaints Procedures
- Information Governance Framework, including Data Protection, Information Security and Computer Use Policies.
- Social Media Policy
- TOWER values and new Competency Framework
- Investors in People accreditation
- Declarations of interest and secondary employment for officers
- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Combatting Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Supply Chain Ethical Code of Conduct

## **Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**

### **Supporting principles:**

- B1 Openness
- B2 Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders
- B3 Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

The following items are applicable to all three strands of Core Principle B

### **The Council supports Principles B1 to B3 in the following ways:**

- Publishing a Constitution setting out the Council's governance and decision-making arrangements.
- All formal decision-making meetings have agendas, reports and minutes which are published on the Council's website and also available to anyone through the Mod.Gov tablet app. Most committee meetings are also webcast for increased visibility.
- The Council publishes and maintains a constantly updating list of planned important Executive decisions on the Council's website. This includes reports for Cabinet and any other key Executive decisions.
- The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee engage stakeholders, residents and community groups to review services and drive improvement in service delivery. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee co-opts residents with relevant knowledge onto the Committee and encourages residents to attend its meetings, which are open to the public and webcast. Further, residents, community groups and expert witnesses are invited to participate in Scrutiny review and challenge sessions so the Committee can hear directly from those whose interest are represented.
- The Council has updated its Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit is to provide officers, Members, stakeholders and local communities with guidance and advice on how the scrutiny function works at Tower Hamlets. The Toolkit clarifies processes so residents know how they can get involved. Through the Council website residents can also suggest areas for review by scrutiny. [https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgn/council\\_and\\_democracy/Overview-and-scrutiny.aspx](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgn/council_and_democracy/Overview-and-scrutiny.aspx). The Scrutiny function is responding to recommendations made by the current internal audit review.
- The Strategic Plan is the main strategic business planning document of the council. It sets out the corporate priorities and outcomes, the high-level activities that the Council will undertake to deliver the outcomes, as well as the measures that will help us determine whether we are achieving the outcomes. The Strategic Plan outlines the Council's approach to tackling

inequality and improving outcomes for residents and has tackling inequality at its core outlining the priorities and outcomes for reducing inequality and need in the borough.

- The Intelligence & Performance and Communications teams provide advice on designing, running and analysing consultations and surveys to Officers around the Council, using the Council's consultation and engagement hub with its various engagement tools. The Council actively engages specific groups depending on the nature of the consultation / survey. The Council commissions a specialist market research company to undertake its Annual Resident Survey with key findings made public.
- The Council has an established voluntary and community sector strategy and a Local Community Fund and Small Grants Programme, which has been developed in co-production with the VCS.
- The Tower Hamlets Plan sets out how we will work with our key strategic partners through the Tower Hamlets Partnership and sub groups to deliver cross cutting actions for the borough.
- The Council belongs to a range of public sector information sharing networks for example sharing performance data for benchmarking and improvement with London LAs through London Councils. We are working with the GLA to develop London level data analysis, and with our health partners through a partnership board Tower Hamlets Together.
- The Council makes use of modern committee management software to support the efficient and transparent publication of all information related to the Council's decision-making functions including Councillor contact details, registers of interest, agendas, petitions, ways to get involved and similar.
- The Council maintains a public register of Members interests and declarations made at meetings. These are published on the Council website and monitoring on interests for Members is undertaken by the Standards Advisory Committee.
- Freedom of Information processes to allow for the submission and publication of Freedom of Information requests
- Complaints systems to allow residents to challenge the Council.
- Use of the Open Government Licence for Public Sector Information ensures that people can make use of our data without having to apply for permission.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principles B1 to B3:**

- The Council's Constitution
- Publication of committee agendas and minutes of meetings.
- Forward Plan / Forthcoming Decisions pages

- Committee software system
- Register of Members' Interests
- Strategic and Business Plans
- Tower Hamlets Plan
- Scrutiny Committee reports to Cabinet and Council
- Scrutiny Toolkit
- Strategic Plan (equalities embedded) Equality Analysis
- Annual Residents' Survey and other surveys
- Range of consultations
- Borough Profile
- Co-production Framework
- Tower Hamlets Together Board and Joint Commissioning Executive
- Freedom of Information Publication and Disclosure Log
- Publication Scheme
- Corporate Complaints Procedure and Statutory Complaints Procedures
- Customer Contact Centre and Complaints Procedure
- Staff Training and Development
- Engaging staff forums
- Change Champions (i.e. Your Voice Ambassadors)
- Youth Council and Young Mayor
- Annual Statement of Accounts
- Medium Term Financial Strategy and regular MTFS reports
- The Internal Audit function
- The role of the Audit Committee
- Open Government Licence for Public Sector Information
- Expected Standards for responding to residents/customers
- A range of communication channels including digital infrastructure (website, social media, newsletter, plasma screens in Idea Stores and other buildings), physical infrastructure (street advertising, vehicle advertising) and print (Our East End).

- Partnership Boards and their Terms of Reference/ Structures/ Minutes) (including for example Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership Board, Tower Hamlets Together Board Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board, Children and Families Executive.

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

### **The Council supports Core Principle C in the following ways:**

- The Council has an established voluntary and community sector strategy and a Local Community Fund which has been developed in co-production with the VCS and Small Grants Programme to support a vibrant local VCS.
- The Strategic Plan is the main strategic business planning document of the council. It sets out the corporate priorities and outcomes, the high-level activities that the Council will undertake to deliver the outcomes, as well as the measures that will help us determine whether we are achieving the outcomes. The Council has a structured set of plans which turn our vision into actions, through Directorate, Key Council Strategies and Business Plans.
- Works with key partners in the Tower Hamlets Partnership Executive Group to identify and deliver on borough wide social, economic and environmental outcomes the Tower Hamlets Partnership partners are seeking to achieve.
- The report templates for all Council, Cabinet and Committee reports contains specific sections to highlight key risks such as those around equalities, environment, crime etc.
- The Council has a clear vision of the quality and nature of service delivery which we need to provide to meet the needs of our local community. To do this, ongoing investment needs to be made to our staff through our People Strategy.
- The Council's Local Plan sets out the spatial vision for the borough and when supplemented by our planning policies puts in place the tools for how the council works with stakeholders to shape the built environment to deliver economic, social and environment outcomes identified within the strategic and TH Plan.
- These documents are further complemented by a range of key strategies which also set out clear economic, social and environmental outcomes.
- The Council is committed to sustainable development and has a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy, Carbon Management Plan, Air Quality Action Plan to improve environmental outcomes for local residents. We also have in place a Transport Strategy which promotes sustainable transport and a Waste Strategy which promotes waste reduction which complements our environmental objectives.
- The council is committed to maximising the benefit of economic growth and ensuring the benefits from this growth are shared amongst those who live and work in the borough. Our Growth Plan seeks to improve the employment outcomes for residents and support the growth of businesses operating and is supplemented by our High Streets and Town Centre Strategy.

- Our Housing Strategy puts in place a range of actions to improve access to housing of all tenures, prioritising the delivery of affordable homes and seeks to improve the quality and condition of housing across the Borough. This is supplemented by our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy which sets out the council's priorities for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years.
- This cannot be done alone, and the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum is a partnership between housing associations and the Council to deliver on our housing, social and environmental and economic objectives.
- The Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-21 sets out how we will look to make Tower Hamlets a safer and more cohesive place to live.
- These outcomes as they relate to Children and Families are addressed in various strategies and by children's partnership boards

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Core Principle C:**

- Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy
- Strategic Plan and Business Plans
- [Community Engagement Strategy](#)
- Risk Implications section in all reports
- Local Plan 2031: and related Planning policies and documents
- Growth Plan
- High Street and Town Centre Strategy
- Air Quality and Climate Change Strategy
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Transport Strategy
- Waste Management Strategy
- Our East End
- Financial and Budget Planning Consultations
- Risk Management Policy and Procedures
- Corporate Risk Register
- Annual Statement of Accounts

- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reporting being presented alongside one another
- Capital Strategy
- The work of the external auditors
- Housing Strategy
- Tower Hamlets Housing Forum
- Self-Build Policy
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Community Safety Partnership Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Substance Misuse Strategy
- Mental Health Strategy
- Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy
- Safeguarding Adults Board Strategy
- Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Children and Families Strategy 2019-24
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) Strategy.

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

### **Supporting principles:**

- D1 Determining Interventions
- D2 Planning Interventions
- D3 Optimising Achievement and Intended Outcomes

The following items are applicable to all three strands of Core Principle D

### **The Council supports Principles D1 to D3 in the following ways:**

- Looking to ensure that decision making processes receive objective and rigorous analysis including involvement of the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer with all reports having set sections for legal and finance comments and all reports requiring final finance and legal clearance before publication.
- Council, Cabinet and Committees receive regular reports on performance monitoring, the strategic plan and other policies and procedures to demonstrate the level to which intended outcomes are being achieved and any interventions planned to address issues.
- Our Strategic and Business Plans look to have a clear vision of the economic, social and environment of the borough, which has been informed by extensive analysis of key data, service intelligence and national and regional policy.
- The Council's Corporate Portfolio Management Office is responsible for setting standards for programme and project management to make sure we can seek to be excellent in delivering change.
- The Council's Performance Management and Accountability Framework (PMAF) sets out our approach to monitoring, managing and improving performance. It sets out roles and responsibilities and establishes certain governance structures. It sets the framework within which individual Directorates and services should manage performance and how issues are escalated. Performance Improvement Board is the main board responsible for identifying and determining interventions to bring about improvements at strategic level.
- We are committed to undertaking needs assessments that provide evidence for areas where service improvement may be required. Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) helps us and our health partners understand resident's needs relating to health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing. In addition, the Borough Profile provides data and analysis in a range of topic areas such as crime, housing, income, jobs, education, supporting practitioners and policy

officers to identify interventions necessary to achieve outcomes. We use the Borough Profile to develop a Borough Equality Assessment which enables us to set our equality objectives.

- The Council prepares an Annual Governance Statement that assesses the Council's governance framework and identifies areas for improvement. This is presented to the Audit Committee each year and included in the Council's Statement of Accounts. The Council will seek to implement any action plans agreed to address any identified weaknesses.
- The Council's Emergency Planning works to try to ensure the Council can react quickly and robustly to any emergency situation effecting residents or its own ability to provide services. A number of plans have also been prepared on a multi-agency basis to deal with specific threats.
- Internal Audit, who are outcome, focused and providing assurance opinions on the effective management of risk leading to the organisational achievement of outcomes and priorities

**Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principles D1 to D3:**

- Constitution containing the scheme of delegation and financial regulations
- Strategic and Business Plans
- Co-Production Framework
- Community equality and engagement groups
- Scrutiny Committees
- Corporate Leadership Team
- Performance Management and Accountability Framework
- Needs Analysis such as Borough Profile and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reports
- Cabinet and Committee agendas and reports.
- Legal and Financial clearance of all relevant reports
- Annual Governance Statement
- Standards for Managing Employee Performance
- Performance Development and Review Scheme
- Borough Major Emergency Plan
- Multi Agency Plans
- Business Continuity Policy

- Budget Setting and approval process
- Risk Management Framework
- Business Plans and Consultations and Savings Tracker
- Risk Management Policy

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

### **Supporting principles:**

- E1 Developing the entity's capacity
- E2 Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals

### **The Council supports Principles E1 and E2 in the following ways:**

- The Constitution is published on the website and has been reviewed within the last year with the General Purposes Committee receiving regular reports on the Constitution. It contains many relevant sections including the Scheme of Officer delegations, Terms of References for committees and panels, Member and Officer Codes of Conduct and the Member / Officer relations protocol.
- The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), Cabinet, Council and Committees receive reports on how the Council is performing and to highlight areas of weaker performance. CLT in particular receive regular reports on matters of performance. In addition, the CLT also have a specific CLT Transformation Board to examine these sorts of issues.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has reviewed its processes and has implemented recommendations to further strengthen its effectiveness and support a culture of Overview and Scrutiny throughout the Council. This review also takes place at the end of each municipal year. The Scrutiny function is also being reviewed by Internal Audit and will look to adopt any improvement proposals set out.
- New members are supported through an induction programme to scrutiny, which includes effective questioning techniques and training throughout the year, covering budget scrutiny, performance reporting and one-to-one chairing skills. Further, scrutiny Members are provided with tools, advice and guidance through a scrutiny toolkit.
- Key to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's effectiveness is a well-developed work programme.
- The Partnership Governance structure includes a Partnership Executive Group led by the Mayor with chief officers from key local partner organisations and a range of Partnership groups/ board including statutory boards.
- The partnership agreed a borough wide Plan 'Tower Hamlets Plan' to provide system wider leadership on few priority areas that needed improvement.

- Led by CLT and managed by the Corporate Portfolio Management Office, the Council's Transformation programme is called SMARTER TOGETHER. Focusing on ensuring the Council is more agile, leaner, and strategic to achieve the best outcomes with our limited resources.
- A comprehensive programme of member induction sessions was provided after the Local Elections. These are followed by an ongoing member development programme. The programme provides annual updates on mandatory training areas, opportunities for training in specialist portfolio areas as well as personal development for members. In addition, training can be provided on an ad-hoc basis should issues become apparent.
- Members have been provided with an online portal giving them access to many useful documents and links to assist them in carrying out their roles.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principles E1 and E2:**

- The Council's Constitution, including:
  - Scheme of Delegation
  - Committee Terms of Reference
  - 'Other Bodies' Terms of Reference
  - Member Code of Conduct
  - Officer Code of Conduct
  - Member Officer Relations Protocol
- Partnerships Governance Structure
- Tower Hamlets Plan
- Partnership Annual Report
- Smarter Together Transformation Programme
- Corporate Portfolio Management Office Scrutiny Committees
- Reports to CLT, Cabinet, Council and Committees
- Member Induction Programme and wider Member Development Programme
- Members' Hub
- People Resource Plan
- Corporate Training Programme
- PDP/PDR Process

- Job descriptions and person specifications
- Continuous professional development for officers
- Secondment policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Toolkit
- Workforce Development Strategies
- Corporate Induction and wider induction policies
- TOWER values and new Competency Framework
- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reporting being presented alongside one another
- Corporate Risk Register
- Role of Internal Audit
- Business Planning Processes
- Employee Assistance Programme.

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

### **Supporting principle F1 Managing risk**

#### **The Council supports Principle F1 in the following ways:**

- The Council's Constitution sets out the Council's decision making in relation to Financial Management including through the Budget and Policy Framework, Key Decisions and Officer Schemes of Delegation.
- All report templates contain sections to highlight the risks associated with the proposals set out in the reports.
- The Council looks to ensure that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated, and the Corporate Risk register is reported to and reviewed by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and Audit Committee on a regular basis.
- The Council has recently reviewed its whistleblowing policy which the Audit Committee has agreed. There is a related whistleblowing section on the Council's intranet (The Bridge).
- The Council's Emergency Planning works to ensure the Council can react quickly and robustly to any emergency situation effecting residents or its own ability to provide services. A number of plans have also been prepared on a multi-agency basis to deal with specific threats.

#### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Supporting Principle F1:**

- The Council's Constitution
- Performance dashboards, scorecards and reports
- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reporting being presented alongside one another to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet
- Cabinet and Committee Report Templates
- Risk Reports to CLT, DLT's and Committees
- Data Sharing Agreements
- Information Governance Framework
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Borough Major Emergency Plan

- Multi Agency Plans
- Business Continuity Policy
- Publishing spend exceeding £250
- Risk Management Strategy and Toolkit
- Corporate Risk Register
- Regular risk management reports to the Audit Committee
- Internal Audit Plan, annual report and recommendations tracker
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Action Plan
- The role of external audit
- Risk Champions Group
- Audit Committee
- Risk reports to Committees
- Project Management Framework
- Financial Regulations.

### **Supporting Principle F2 Managing performance**

#### **The Council supports Principle F2 in the following ways:**

- The council looks to make decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook.
- Quarterly strategic performance monitoring of the strategic plan and strategic outcome measures is a separate agenda item for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Members and senior management are provided with regular reports on performance and progress towards outcome achievement.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle F2:**

- Scrutiny Committees
- Performance Management & Accountability Framework
- Performance, dashboards, scorecards and reports
- Customer Feedback
- Committee agendas, reports and minutes
- Cabinet and Committee report templates
- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reporting being presented alongside one another
- Savings Tracker
- Business Development Team
- Internal Audit Reports

### **Supporting principle F3 Robust internal control**

#### **The Council supports Principle F3 in the following ways:**

- Reports to Council, Cabinet and Committees are required to set out key implications information in areas such as risk, equalities and environmental impact.
- The Audit Committee is responsible for considering the Council's arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control and recommends any actions accordingly. It receives a number of relevant reports such as internal and external audit plans, reports from internal and external audit, anti-fraud and corruption initiatives, risk management arrangements and similar. The Committees full terms of references are provided in the Council's Constitution.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle F3:**

- Annual Governance Statement
- Reports to Council, Cabinet and Committees of the Council with implications provided that are clear and measured.
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Internal Audit
- Internal Audit progress and Outcome Reports
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Procedures
- Corporate Risk Register
- Audit Committee.

### **Supporting principle F4 Managing data**

#### **The Council supports Principle F4 in the following ways:**

- The Council looks to operate to expected Data Protection, information security and records management policies in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle F4:**

- Partnerships Governance
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information/EIR
- Information Security Incident Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Information Handling Policy
- Senior Information Risk Owner
- Data Protection Officer

- Data Sharing Agreements
- Data protection impact assessments

### **Supporting principle F5 Strong public financial management**

#### **The Council supports Principle F5 in the following ways:**

- Overview And Scrutiny Committee has a crucial role in budget scrutiny. This includes reviewing and scrutinising the Council's annual allocation of financial resources to different services and projects, according to the Council's strategic priorities. This includes reviewing the treatment of risk, setting the council tax, and decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing, the control of its capital expenditure and the setting of virement limits.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis also reviews budget monitoring and performance monitoring reports to provide challenge and identify areas further work by scrutiny
- Residents, businesses and key stakeholder's views relating to the budget consultation are analysed alongside other intelligence which is then used to inform decision-making.
- Budget monitoring reports are presented to Cabinet and are published on the Council's website allowing residents to see how the Council is performing against expected budgets and planned savings.
- Reports to Council, Committees, Cabinet and CLT include financial implications and CFO comments and clearance.
- The Audit Committee is responsible for considering the Council's arrangements for financial management and to recommend any actions accordingly. It receives regular reports such as internal audit plans, risk management arrangements, treasury management strategies and it approves the Council's Statement of Accounts.

#### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle F5:**

- Scrutiny Budget Meetings
- Budget Consultations
- Regular Budget monitoring reports published in Cabinet and overview and scrutiny agendas
- Financial Regulations
- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reporting being presented alongside one another
- Business Plans

- Business Planning Process
- Budget Holders and Finance Business Partners Handbook
- Objection Timetable
- External Auditors

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

The following items are applicable to the four strands of Core Principle G

**Supporting principle G1: Implementing good practice in transparency**

**The Council supports Principle G1 in the following ways:**

- The Council has a published constitution setting out how decisions are taken and how the public can get involved in decision making, including Access to Information, Petitions and ways of getting involved in decision making.
- Key data, statistics and horizon scanning of policy is produced to support the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in their work programming. Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes are published.
- Having a defined process to try to ensure that reports for the public / stakeholders are fair, balanced and easy to access and understandable for the audience
- The Council seeks to write and communicate reports and other information 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.
- The Council webcasts it's Council, Cabinet, Development Committee, Strategic Development Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to ensure full transparency of the meetings. Since June 2020, the Council has held meetings remotely and during this time all committee and sub committee meetings have been webcast. Since May 2021, hybrid technology has been used to try and ensure physical and remote attendance options are available when possible.
- The Council's maintains an up-to-date website which provides a mechanism for the Council to publish information important in ensuring transparency of its actions.
- The Council has recently reviewed its whistleblowing policy which the Audit Committee has agreed. There is a related whistleblowing section on the Council's intranet.

## **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle G1:**

- The Council's Constitution
- Annual Work Programme of Scrutiny Committees
- Agendas and minutes of Cabinet and Committee Meetings
- Agendas and minutes of Scrutiny and relevant Committees published
- The Executive Forward Plan
- Meeting Webcasts
- Transparency Code
- Data Sharing Agreements
- Publication Scheme
- The Council's Website
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Gender Pay Gap reporting
- Internal Audit Plan, annual report and recommendations tracker
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Action Plan
- External Audit Reports
- Annual Governance Statement
- Communications ensuring residents are informed of key issues, decisions and consultations.
- Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report
- Local Account in adult social care
- Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) annual report

## **Supporting principle G2 Implementing good practice in reporting**

### **The Council supports Principle G2 in the following ways:**

- The Council's constitution sets out the terms of reference of all committees to ensure information is presented to the appropriate committees. Access to information rules set out how the Council maintains good public access to information and reports.
- There are governance arrangements for the partnership structure. The Tower Hamlets Plan identifies how the partnership will work together through the Partnership Executive Group to deliver cross-cutting activities.
- Each Committee has a workplan or similar forward programme including expected monitoring reports.

### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle G2:**

- Partnerships Governance Guidance
- Committee agendas, reports minutes and work plans.
- Constitution including Committee Terms of Reference and Access to Information Rules
- Quarterly and annual finance and performance reporting being presented alongside one another
- Statement of Accounts
- Annual Governance Statement
- Annual External Audit Report and Letter
- Internal Audit Reports

## **Supporting principle G3 Assurance and effective accountability**

### **The Council supports Principle G3 in the following ways:**

- Having processes to ensure external / internal audit recommendations are acted upon / responded to by managers and the Council (G3 & G4)

- There are governance arrangements for the partnership structure. The Tower Hamlets Plan identifies how the partnership will work together through the Partnership Executive Group to deliver cross-cutting activities.
- As part of our extensive improvement journey since 2014, the Council has taken part in a tailored Peer Challenge managed by the LGA. We take part in service specific peer reviews – for example a peer review of our planning service took place in 2018-19.
- The Council uses the results from external inspections to action plan improvements. There is an extensive improvement structure in the Council including Member oversight and Officer operational groups.
- As the Council's senior decision-making body tasked with overseeing this work, the Audit Committee, and any other relevant non-executive committee including Scrutiny, can report up to it any concerns they have regarding actions that have not been undertaken. Council is also a forum for members and the public to formally raise concerns that meeting may direct the Council to act upon.

#### **Supporting documentation and evidence of compliance for Principle G3:**

- Role of Internal and External Audit
- Audit Committee
- Risk Management Procedures
- Peer Reviews
- Results of External Inspections (Ofsted, CQC, ICO etc)
- Partnerships Governance Guidance
- Council Meetings

#### **Supporting principle G4 Managing data.**

See supporting documentation for G1 and G3.