

DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: briefing note for the political and administrative leaders in each local authority

Introduction

Political leaders and chief executives have a leadership responsibility and are accountable for ensuring good governance in their authority. Authorities must be able to demonstrate compliance with the principles of good governance. You need to ensure that your staff are able to carry out the governance review process effectively and that your staff receive appropriate support in this task.

To assist in developing the approach to good governance CIPFA/SOLACE issued *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework* and accompanying guidance note in 2007.

To ensure the Framework remains 'fit for purpose' the CIPFA/SOLACE Joint Working Group has reviewed the Framework and has issued a draft Addendum for consultation. The Working Group is also developing a revised guidance note.

Background

Local government has been undergoing significant change and the environment in which it works is increasing in complexity. In addition to economic and financial challenge, the Localism Act and other key legislation has brought new roles, opportunities and greater flexibility for authorities.

Local authorities are changing the way in which they operate and undertake service provision. Public services are delivered directly, through partnerships, collaboration and through commissioning. Shared services and partnership boards have come into existence. The introduction of new structures and ways of working provide challenges for managing risk, ensuring transparency and demonstrating accountability.

Good governance enables an authority to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with control and the management of risk.

A one-size-fits-all approach to governance is inappropriate. Local governance arrangements must be proportionate to the risks and are acknowledged as the responsibility of each local authority in its area of operation.

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government : Framework

The Framework urges each local authority to test their approach by:

- reviewing existing governance arrangements
- developing and maintaining an up-to-date local code of governance including arrangements for ensuring ongoing effectiveness
- reporting publicly on compliance with their own code on an annual basis and on how they have monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year and on planned changes.

For further details on the Framework and the revised guidance note, please see http://www.cipfa.org.uk/panels/corporate_governance/publications.cfm