

# **Governance, including Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters**

**6.1** The Council recognises that effective local government relies upon maintaining the confidence of the public in both the elected Members and Officers of the Council. The Council continues to keep under review Governance arrangements and related procedures to ensure best practice so that the highest standards are maintained. This is the case both for the Council's own operations and in its Partnership arrangements with other organisations. Partnerships are playing an increasingly important role in the future of policy development and service delivery.

**6.2** The Council's Code of Governance is regularly updated and sets the standards for the conduct of Officers and Members at the City Council. It is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework. The CIPFA/SOLACE Framework introduced the requirement to produce an annual governance statement from 2007/08. The Annual Governance Statement is also available on the Council's website. The Statement is updated following the end of each financial year.

**6.3** The Code of Governance is regarded as a particularly significant part of the Council's corporate framework that is included in Chapter 9 of the Constitution.

**6.4** The Council's documents which relate to Governance are located on the City Council's website.

**6.5** The Council has an Audit and Performance Committee, independent of both the Executive and the Policy and Scrutiny process as recommended by CIPFA. Its terms of reference include a wide range of responsibilities.

**6.6** The Council's Standards Committee's main responsibility is to ensure that high standards of Member conduct are maintained. It does this by ensuring that Members attend training on the Code of Conduct, are briefed on relevant issues and receives an annual overview report on complaints about Member Conduct.

## **6.7 Financial management**

The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the financial rules set out in this Constitution.

## **6.8 Contracts**

Every contract made by the Council will comply with the Contracts Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution.

## **6.9 Legal proceedings**

The Director of Law is authorised to institute, defend or participate in any legal proceedings in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or in any case where the Director of Law considers that such action is necessary to protect the Council's interests.

## **6.10 Authentication of documents**

Where any document is necessary to any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed by the Director of Law or other person so authorised, unless any enactment otherwise authorises or requires, or the Council has given requisite authority to some other person.

All contracts entered into on behalf of the local authority in the course of the discharge of an executive function shall be made in writing. Such contracts must either be signed by at least two officers of the authority or made under the common seal of the council attested by at least one officer.

## **6.11 Common Seal of the Council**

The Common Seal of the Council will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Director of Law. A decision of the Council, or of any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision. The Common Seal will be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Director of Law should be sealed. The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by the Director of Law or some other person authorised under the City Council's Contract Procedures.