

Local Ethical Framework for High Peak Borough Council

The Council's Ethical Framework describes the set of rules and procedures within which the Council operates in order to ensure the highest possible standards of ethical behaviour and good governance. The Ethical Framework includes the statutory provisions contained within the Localism Act 2011 and also reflects guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It sets out the standards of behaviour that the Council expects of its councillors and staff in all areas of their conduct and also clarifies roles and responsibilities for the interaction between councillors and staff.

The overall Ethical Framework for the Council contains several important constituent parts, as outlined below. The Council is committed to reviewing the Framework to ensure that it is entirely "fit for purpose" and reflects all relevant best practice guidance. Responsibility for the development, implementation, monitoring and promotion of the Ethical Framework rests with the Council's Standards Committee under the guidance of the Monitoring Officer.

The principal constituent parts of the Ethical Framework are as follows:

The Constitution

The Constitution sets out the way in which the Council operates, including details as to the way in which decisions are made by the Authority and the rules and procedures to be followed to ensure that all decisions are taken in an appropriate, open and transparent manner and, in particular, in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Council has adopted within its Constitution all relevant statutory provisions and, in addition, has agreed such further procedures as are necessary to ensure the efficient running of the Council. The Council has an established Constitution Sub-Committee to continually review and update the Constitution to ensure that all the requirements referred to within this section are complied with.

The Code of Conduct for Members

The Code adopted by the Council sets out the standards of conduct that councillors are required to adhere to whenever they are conducting the business of the Council, whenever they are carrying out business of the Office to which they have been elected or appointed and when they are acting as a representative of the Council. The Council has adopted a code which complies with the relevant statutory guidance made under the Localism Act 2011.

Local Code of Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance is the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions related to their communities. It is underpinned by the fundamental principles of openness, integrity and accountability. The Local Code of Corporate Governance covers the following core principles for good governance:

- 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 optimise 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

A Corporate Governance Action Plan is produced to cover all areas within the Local Code and reported to and monitored by the Audit and Regulatory Committee.

Register of Interests

The Council's Code of Conduct requires all Councillors to register their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other interests in the Council's Register of Interests. A copy of the full register is available in the Council's offices at Town Hall, Buxton and via its website www.highpeak.gov.uk

Equalities and Diversity Scheme

The Council has adopted policies to ensure compliance with its statutory responsibilities under all legislation relating to the support of equalities and diversity.

Other Supporting Codes and Protocols

The Council has produced further codes and protocols. These are as follows:-

- ◆ A Guide for Members and Officers Appointed to Partnerships and Other Outside Bodies
- ◆ Bullying and Harassment
- ◆ Protocol on Land Use Planning Matters and Development Control Committee
- ◆ Monitoring Officer Protocol
- ◆ Whistleblowing
- ◆ Rights and Responsibilities HPBC Member/Officer Protocols and Conventions
- ◆ ICT Equipment & Information Security Agreement for Councillors
- ◆ Employee Code of Conduct
- ◆ Local Public Services Senior Managers' Code of Ethics
- ◆ Code of Practice for Members – Gifts and Hospitality

Statement of High Peak Borough Council's Group Leaders

This Ethical Framework has been developed by the whole Council and has the support of all political groups.

We are committed to working together to ensure compliance by all members within our groups with both the letter and spirit of the documents forming part of this Ethical Framework.

In particular, we will seek to ensure that no member within our groups behaves in such a way as to give rise to the possibility of a complaint to the Council. In the event of our being made aware of behaviour which may be considered unacceptable we will seek to resolve such matters within our groups, inviting the assistance of the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer as necessary.

We undertake to promote excellent standards of behaviour amongst all members of our groups, to ensure openness, transparency and accountability to those who elect us.