ITEM NO. 10

# REPORT ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Lothian Valuation Joint Board is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It must also ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Board also has a duty under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.

In discharging this overall responsibility the Board is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions.

CIPFA/SOLACE introduced six principles within a framework '*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'* which was published in 2007/08.

The Board has adopted a code of corporate governance in line with the publication. The Code and associated supporting framework are attached as Appendix 1.

## 2 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Audit Scotland has since 2003 provided an annual governance overview in respect of the Board based on principles set at that time. It is now proposed that all Local Government organisations adopt a new framework which is based on the same principles and standards.

It is important that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to underpin the ethos of delivering good governance for the Board. To meet this requirement the following polices are in place and are regularly reviewed;-

- Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations;
- Corporate and Service Planning;
- Risk management framework;
- General policy on the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption;
- ICT security policy;
- Business continuity plan;
- Performance management and planning framework;
- Customer care policy incorporating complaints procedure;
- Whistle blowing policy, in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- Declaration of members' interests in Board minutes.

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## 3 INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION

An Internal Audit Function is provided to the Board by The City of Edinburgh Council's Internal Audit Section. Regular reports are provided to the Treasurer concerning areas of Internal Audit activity, the Board's arrangements for Corporate Governance and, in particular, the systems of internal financial control.

The assistance of The City of Edinburgh Council Internal Audit is very much appreciated and with their help requirements emanating from Audit Scotland reports have been met and good governance maintained.

## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is recommended to:-

1 Note the contents of this report, the work outlined with regard to compliance with the principles and requirements of Corporate Governance.

2 To approve the adoption of the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Joan M Hewton

**Joan M Hewton**
**ASSESSOR** **26 June 2009**

# LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values by which the Board is directed and controlled. It enables the Board to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and designed to manage risk to an acceptable level and provide reasonable assurance that policies, aims and objectives can be delivered. The system of control is designed to identify and prioritise risks to the achievements of the Board's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of these risks being realised and impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Within and through the application of this framework it is intended to show compliance with the principles of Corporate Governance and in so doing fulfil the recommendations of Audit Scotland and Internal Audit.

## 2 PRINCIPLES OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate Governance is underpinned by the following principles:-

***Openness and Inclusivity***
Openness is essential to ensure that all stakeholders have confidence in the decision-making process, management processes and individuals within the Board. In addition, openness involves an inclusive approach to all stakeholders by the Board and engaging with them in an effective manner.

***Integrity***
Integrity is based on honesty, selflessness and objectivity and involves high standards of propriety and probity in the stewardship of public funds and management of the Board's affairs.

***Accountability***
Accountability is the process by which the Board, and its elected members and officers, are responsible for their actions and decisions.

To ensure that these principles are integrated within the decision making of the Board, and are properly reflected in the systems and processes adopted for service delivery, a Corporate Governance Framework has been constructed.

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## 3 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Principles that comprise the Board's governance arrangements are as follows:-

1. **Governance Principle 1** – Focusing on the purpose of the Joint Board and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

   This principle is about exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Board's purpose, vision and intended outcomes for citizens and service users; ensuring high quality services are delivered and that the best use is made of resources.

2. **Governance Principle 2** - Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

   This principle is about defining roles of elected members and senior officers, making sure responsibilities are clearly defined and that constructive working relationships are achieved, and ensuring relationships between the Board, its partners and the public are clear.

3. **Governance Principle 3** - Promoting values for the Joint Board and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

   High standards of behaviour are essential to good governance and there is an expectation that elected members and senior officers will exercise leadership through exemplary standards of behaviour and ensure these values are effectively replicated throughout the organisation.

4. **Governance Principle 4** - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

   Scrutiny is secured by means of a significant monitoring and regulatory framework involving both internal and external inspection of processes as well as self-evaluation by services.

5. **Governance Principle5** - Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective

   This element is designed to ensure that both members and officers have the knowledge, skills and capacity to fulfil their respective roles effectively.

6. **Governance Principle 6** - Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

   The Board achieves this through timely publication of its annual accounts and statutory performance information. An annual public performance report is published and quarterly progress reports are prepared as a means of advising of development of the Boards services

## 4 MONITORING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

In response to each of these statements and requirements, the Code indicates the criteria to be used as evidence of effective compliance by the Board, and the means of demonstrating annual compliance and review.

Both Audit Scotland and The City of Edinburgh Council Internal Audit have given guidance on the range of documentation, whether in the form of policies or strategy statements, which assist to underpin and support the principles of sound corporate governance. These are reflected in the criteria for compliance as indicated in the Code.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance requires regular review of:-

- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
- Members Code of Conduct;
- Performance Measurement and Planning Framework;
- Risk Management Strategy which includes a Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan;
- Risk Management Strategy to be supported by an Information Management and Technology Strategy statement which includes an Information Security Strategy;
- Policies in respect of Public Interest Disclosure and the Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption;
- Policies in respect of Customer Care and incorporating complaints procedure.

### 4.1 Internal Financial Controls

The Board's Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained. The system of internal financial control can provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period

Internal audit is an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the Board on the control environment comprising risk management, internal control, and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation's objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient, and effective use of resources. Internal Audit conducts its work in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom 2006.*

The Board has an in-house audit team who monitor the day to day work of the organisation ensuring that policies, processes and procedures are adhered to. The Audit manager reports monthly to the senior management team.

The Assessor is accountable on a day to day basis to the Treasurer, quarterly to Lothian Valuation Joint Board and annually to Chief Officers of the four constituent councils.

**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK 2008/09 – LOTHIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

**SCHEDULE TO ASSIST IN PUTTING THE SIX PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE**

| **Principle 1: Focusing on the purpose of the Joint Board and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area** | | | | |
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| **Supporting Principle** | **The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:** | **Source documents/good practice/other names that may be used to demonstrate competence** | **Score (1 - 4)** | **Improvement Plan** |
| 1. Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Joint Board's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users. | 1.1 Develop and promote the Joint Board's purpose and vision. | **Corporate Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08----incorporates a Mission Statement.<br><br>**Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>❖ The Board is subject to Scottish Government Key Performance Indicators and Targets for Valuation Roll and Council Tax activities, while Electoral Registration is subject to Performance Standards and Financial Performance Standards introduced by the Electoral Commission. | **3** | |
| | 1.2 Review on a regular basis the Joint Board's vision for the local area and its implications for the Board's governance arrangements | **Arrangements for Corporate Governance**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>**Local Code of Corporate Governance**<br>❖ Noted on web site | **3** | |

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| | 1.3 Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners | Recent examples of partnership working are joint activities to promote Electoral Registration, joint working on address management issues and the creation of address gazetteers, and cross Scotland working with all other Assessors in order to create the Scottish Assessors Association Web Portal. | **3** | |
| | 1.4 Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the Joint Board's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance | **Annual Public Report**<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Audited Accounts for Year End 31/03/08 and Auditor's Report**<br>❖ Reported to Board 01/12/08<br>❖ Published on web site | **3** | |
| 2 Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning | 2.1 Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available | **Quarterly Progress Report**<br>❖ Reported to Joint Board meeting on 27/06 and 01/12/08<br>❖ Assessors quarterly progress report to the Board outlining performance set against targets.<br>❖ Treasurers quarterly report outlining budget activity and providing year end projections.<br>❖ Internally, the use of KPI and other internal performance indicators. These are reported on a monthly basis to the Assessor and managers.<br>❖ Financial reports are | **3** | |

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| | | produced quarterly by the Treasurer providing on budget progress and giving projection information for year-end. | | |
| | 2.2 Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery | **LVJB Policies** (published on web site)<br>❖ Strategic Objectives Risk Register<br>❖ Operational Rolling Risk Register<br>❖ Risk Management Strategy<br>❖ Information Management & Technology Security<br>❖ Customer Care Policy reported to Joint Board meeting 22/09/08<br>❖ Business Continuity Plan<br>❖ ICT Disaster Recovery Policy | **3** | |
| 3 Ensuring that the Joint Board makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money | 3.1 Decide how value for money (VFM) is to be measured and make sure that the Board has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions | **The Board**<br><br>**External & Internal Audit**<br><br>**Quarterly Progress Report**<br>❖ Reported to Joint Board meeting on 27/06 and 01/12/08<br>❖ The combination of Assessors quarterly performance report, Treasurers Financial reports, the Service Plans, PRD Policy, KPI and associated, all provide the necessary continuity to the process of best value and value for money. | **2** | In the forthcoming year LVJB shall have to secure an Energy Certificate for their premises at 17a South Gyle Crescent. This measures the environmental impact of the building. |

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| | | ❖ In terms of environmental impact, the LVJB has recently introduced changes to external survey practises in order to reduce the requirement for external car orientated survey while also exploring alternative methods of collecting information. | | |

| Principle 2: | Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles | | | |
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| **Supporting Principle** | **The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:** | **Source documents/good practice/other names that may be used to demonstrate competence** | **Score (1 - 4)** | **Improvement Plan** |
| 1 Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Joint Board and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function | 1.1 Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of members generally and senior officers | **Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>**Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>**Code of Conduct Policy** (Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>**Public Interest Disclosure Policy**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Dated June 2004<br><br>All senior officer posts have detailed job specifications/descriptions.<br><br>Induction training is provided by each of the constituent councils for newly elected councillors. This covers all aspects of Councillor responsibilities and any specific areas of involvement, including responsibilities in respect of committees and boards. | **3** | |

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| 2 Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between the Joint Board's members and officers and that the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard | 2.1 Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the Joint Board, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required | **Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>**Code of Conduct Policy** (Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>Policy and Procedure for dealing with Code of Conduct for Employees. | **3** | |
| | 2.2 Make the Assessor responsible and accountable to the Joint Board for all aspects of operational management | **Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>Regular reporting to the Board by the Assessor on operational management, performance and outcomes. | **3** | |
| | 2.3 Develop protocols to ensure that the Convenor and Assessor negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained | **Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br>❖ Currently under review and due for approval at Board meeting of 26th June 2009<br><br>**Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04 | **3** | |

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| | | ❖ Currently under review and due for approval at Board meeting of 26th June 2009 | | |
| | 2.4 Make a senior officer (the section 95 officer) responsible to Joint Board for ensuring appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records/accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control | **Financial Regulations**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Section 1 General (2)<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br>❖ Currently under review and due for approval at Board meeting of 26th June 2009<br><br>**Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Section 15: Treasurer<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04 | **3** | |
| | 2.5 Make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the Joint Board for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with | **Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br>**Item 7: Appointment of Solicitor to the Board and Monitoring Officer**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04 | **3** | |
| 3 Ensuring relationships between the Joint Board, its partners and the public are clear so that each know what to expect of the other | 3.1 Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles | **Standing Orders (**Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board 8/03/04<br><br>**Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04 | **3** | |
| | 3.2 Ensure that an established scheme for remuneration of | **Equal Employment Opportunities Policy** (October 2000) | **3** | |

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| | members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable) are in place | ❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Reviewed February 2008-minor changes only.<br><br>**Recruitment & Selection Policy** (November 2002)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 26/11/02<br>❖ Noted for review 2009 | | |
| | 3.3 Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery | **Corporate Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br>❖ Assessor's quarterly reports to the Board on performance, targets and activities.<br>❖ Provision of KPI and associated information. | **3** | |
| | 3.4 Ensure that the Joint Board's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated | **Corporate Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br>**Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08 | **3** | |
| | 3.5 When working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the Joint Board | In respect of our key partnerships the provision of information is primarily driven by statue and legal requirement. Examples of this are the provision of rateable value and council tax band information to the Finance Departments of our councils, and the provision of electoral information to Returning | **3** | |

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| | | Officers at the time of elections. Surrounding this provision however there is partnership working to establish formats for exchange, timetables, etc.<br><br>Recently we have been involved with the creation of the SAA Web Portal. This involved close partnership working to agree the scope of the project, timescales, level of development, project management, cost distribution etc. To achieve this all 14 Assessors entered into a formal partnership agreement, a signed document was produced, that detailed the roles and responsibilities. | | |
| | 3.6 When working in partnership, ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership; and ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions | See above | **3** | |

| Principle 3: | Promoting values for the Joint Board and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour | | | |
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| **Supporting Principle** | **The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:** | **Source documents/good practice/other names that may be used to demonstrate competence** | **Score (1 - 4)** | **Improvement Plan** |
| 1 Ensuring the Joint Board members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance | 1.1 Ensure that the Joint Board's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect | **Code of Conduct Policy** (Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>The Assessor operates a structured and tiered series of Management meetings, the minutes of which are placed on the staff intranet. All key operational decisions are clearly visible. In addition an agreed series of meetings with staff representatives is arranged on an annual basis. | **3** | |
| | 1.2 Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the Joint Board, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols | **Code of Conduct Policy** (Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>**Policy on Fair Treatment at Work**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 14/03/04<br><br>Policy and Procedure for Dealing | **3** | |

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| | | with Code of Conduct for Employees.<br><br>Customer Care Policy. | | |
| | 1.3 Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the Joint Board are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice | **Public Interest Disclosure Policy**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Dated June 2004<br><br>**Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>**Code of Conduct Policy**<br>(Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Code of Conduct for Employees.<br><br>The Board has a range of equality policies covering gender, age, disability, race and equal opportunities. | **3** | |
| 2 Ensuring organisational values are put into practice and are effective | 2.1 Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with | **Training and Education Policy**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>Performance Review and Development Policy.<br><br>Customer care policy | **3** | |

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| | members, staff, the community and partners | Attached to many of our key processes are performance requirements aimed at maintaining organisational objectives and performance. For example response times to letters, e-mails, how to deal with telephone enquiries. | | |
| | 2.2 Put in place arrangements to ensure systems/processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice | **Code of Conduct Policy** (Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>The Assessors service delivery responsibilities are to a great extent driven by statutory requirement and legal prescription. Our internal processes and procedures are all designed to satisfy these requirements in an even handed, fair and transparent fashion. Our own Audit Section monitors compliance and performance associated with these processes. | **3** | |
| | 2.3 Develop and maintain an effective standards committee (or ensure the function is undertaken by an appropriate equivalent) | **The Board**<br>❖ Meets quarterly Policies, Financial & Governance issues discussed<br><br>**Internal & External Audit** | **3** | |
| | 2.4 Use the Joint Board's shared values to act as a guide for | **Policy on Fair Treatment at Work** | **3** | |

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| | decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Joint Board | ❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Reviewed 2005 and reported to the Board on 14th March 2005<br><br>**Training and Education Policy**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>**Equal Employment Opportunities Policy** (Oct 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site | | |
| | 2.5 In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively. | N/A | **N/A** | |

| **Principle 4:** | **Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk** | | | |
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| **Supporting Principle** | **The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:** | **Source documents/good practice/other names that may be used to demonstrate competence** | **Score (1 - 4)** | **Improvement Plan** |
| 1. Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny | 1.1 Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Joint Board's performance overall and that of any | **Corporate Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>**Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08 | **3** | |

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| | organisation for which it is responsible | **Risk Management Strategy**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>**Strategic Objectives Risk Register**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>**Operational Rolling Risk Register**<br><br>**Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy** (January 2005)<br>❖ Published on web site | | |
| | 1.2 Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based | **Board Meetings**<br><br>**Senior Management Meetings**<br>❖ Monthly basis – Risk standing item<br><br>**General Management Meetings**<br>❖ Monthly basis – Risk standing item<br>**Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>Many decisions within the organisation are based on performance information that is produced monthly. For example key performance indicators, internal performance indicators.<br>In addition "action notes" are | **3** | |

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| | | attached to all Management Meetings that enable decisions to be formally progressed and monitored. On all Management meeting agendas there are standing items for "risk" and "equalities". | | |
| | 1.3 Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice. | **Public Interest Disclosure Policy** (June 2004)<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Code of Conduct Policy** (Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>Policy and procedure for Dealing with Code of Conduct for Employees. | **3** | |
| | 1.4 Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee | **Internal Audit**<br>❖ The External Auditor recommended in 2003 that the Board consider an annual report from the Chief Internal Auditor. | **3** | |
| | 1.5 Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints | **LVJB Comments & Complaints Procedure**<br>❖ Published on FOI Page of web site | **3** | |

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| | | Complaints Procedure now forms part of the Customer Care Policy that was agreed by the Board on 22nd September 2008 and is available on our web site and staff intranet. | | |
| 2 Having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs | 2.1 Ensure that those making decisions for the Joint Board are provided with information fit for purpose - relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications | **Board Meetings**<br><br>Solicitor, monitoring officer and treasurer provide advice. Assessor provides reports and offers recommendations to the Board supported where necessary by relevant statistical information.<br><br>Assessors activities are driven by statutory requirement and legal prescription. | **3** | |
| | 2.2 Ensure professional advice on matters which have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately | **Board Meetings**<br><br>Solicitor to the Board, Monitoring Officer to the Board, and Treasurer to the Board provide all relevant information and advice prior to decision making. | **3** | |
| 3 Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place | 3.1 Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Joint Board, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk | **Risk Management Strategy**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>Business Continuity Plan.<br>The Assessor reports on risk as part of her quarterly reports to the Board. | **3** | |

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| | management is part of their jobs | **Senior Management Meetings**<br>❖ Monthly basis – Risk standing item<br><br>**General Management Meetings**<br>Monthly basis – Risk standing item | | |
| | 3.2 Ensure that arrangements are in place for whistle-blowing to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access | **Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy** (January 2005)<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>Public Interest Disclosure Policy | **3** | |
| 4 Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their areas | 4.1 Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities | **Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>**Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04 | **3** | |
| | 4.2 Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on the Joint Board | **Corporate Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>**Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08 | **3** | |

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| | by public law | | | |
| | 4.3 Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law - rationality, legality and natural justice - into their procedures and decision making processes | **Standing Orders**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br>**Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>**Financial Regulations**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04 | **3** | |

| Principle 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective | | | | |
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| **Supporting Principle** | **The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:** | **Source documents/good practice/other names that may be used to demonstrate competence** | **Score (1- 4)** | **Improvement Plan** |
| 1 Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform their roles well | 1.1 Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis | **Recruitment & Selection Policy** (November 2002)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 26/11/02<br><br>**Training & Education**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>Board members are subject to induction training.<br>All staff are subject to induction and continuous assessment via the performance review and development policy.<br>The budget has a standing element for training and education.<br>Within the organisation we are currently working on a policy of succession planning and knowledge sharing. | 3 | |
| | 1.2 Ensure statutory officers have skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and these roles are understood throughout the Joint Board | **Training & Education**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>Every member of staff has a detailed job description/specification.<br>These are published on the staff intranet.<br>Certain posts within the | 3 | |

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| | | organisation require professional qualifications and the maintenance of these is subject to continuing professional development. Senior officers are also part of the Scottish Assessors Association through which many matters/issues are discussed from best practise to legal interpretation, and valuation approaches to cross border valuation harmonisation. | | |
| 2 Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group | 2.1 Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively | **Arrangements for Corporate Governance**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>**Local Code of Corporate Governance**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>Councillors undergo a Training Needs Analysis that identifies all training to date and areas requiring further training.<br><br>Through the PRD policy skills training requirements are identified and subsequent action taken. | **3** | In terms of CPD It is intended that a pilot scheme be established that shall take the form of one to one sessions for councillors |
| | 2.2 Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise, challenge and recognise when outside | **Corporate Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>**Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board | **3** | |

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| | expert advice is needed | meeting 01/02/08 | | |
| | 2.3 Ensure effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the Joint Board as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs | **Performance and Review Policy**<br>❖ Applies to all staff<br><br>Through the PRD policy skills training requirements are identified. | **3** | |
| 3 Encouraging new talent for membership of the Joint Board so that best use can be made of individuals skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal | 3.1 Ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Joint Board | **Recruitment & Selection Policy** (November 2002)<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 26/11/02<br><br>**Training & Education**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>The Board operates a number of equalities policies such as gender, age, disability, race and equal opportunities. There is also a Customer Care Policy.<br><br>The Boards web site is comprehensive and provides information and access to our services.<br><br>Our Annual Performance Report is circulated and aims | **3** | |

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| | | to encourage engagement with the stakeholder. | | |
| | 3.2 Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development | **Training & Education**<br>❖ Noted on web site<br><br>Each member of staff has a detailed job description/specification. Certain posts are tied to professional training programmes and courses of study.<br>The organisational structure allows for career progression.<br>A current policy of succession planning and knowledge sharing is underway. | **3** | |

| Principle 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability | | | | |
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| **Supporting Principle** | **The code should reflect the requirement for local authorities to:** | **Source documents/good practice/other names that may be used to demonstrate competence** | **Score (1 - 4)** | **Improvement Plan** |
| 1 Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships | 1.1 Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what | **Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>Boards web site gives comprehensive information on the functions of the Board, its activities and performance. In addition senior staff are identified. | 3 | |
| | 1.2 Consider institutional stakeholders to whom the Joint Board is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required | **Board meetings**<br><br>While no direct accountability exists, through the Scottish Assessors Association relationships exist with a range of organisations and institutions, for example, Scottish Government, Scotland Office, Electoral Commission, Valuation Office Agency, Federation of Small Businesses, National Gazetteer Board, Ministry of Justice, etc | 3 | |
| | 1.3 Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function | **Annual Public Report**<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Audited Accounts for the Year Ended 31/03/08 and Auditor's Report**<br>❖ Reported to Board 01/12/08<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Local Code of Corporate** | 3 | |

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| | | **Governance**<br>❖ Annual Review by Internal Audit presented to the Board 22/09/08<br><br>**Internal Audit – Annual Report**<br>❖ Presented to Board 27/06/08 | | |
| 2 Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the Joint Board, in partnership or by commissioning | 2.1 Ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively | **Information readily available on web site**<br><br>**Public Interest Disclosure Policy** (June 2004)<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>Customer Care Policy<br>Equalities policies.<br><br>Web site offers comprehensive information on services provided.<br><br>The organisation operates a Support Section that deals directly with the vast majority of incoming enquiries from all stakeholders. In essence this section provides a one-stop shop service. | **3** | |
| | 2.2 Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality | All Board meetings are held in public unless specific items are deemed to be heard in private. | **3** | |
| | 2.3 Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the Joint Board to engage with all sections of the | **Board meetings**<br><br>**Information readily available on web site** | **3** | |

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| | community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands | Customer Care policy indicates the manner in which the different requirements of our stakeholders are attended to. | | |

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| | 2.4 Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result | **Freedom of Information Page on web site**<br>❖ LVJB Model Publication Scheme (May 2004)<br><br>Feedback mechanism on the LVJB web site and the SAA Web Portal. Stakeholders are also encouraged to feedback from the Annual Public Report. | 3 | |
| | 2.5 On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the Joint Board's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period | **Annual Public Report**<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Audited Accounts for the Year Ended 31/03/08 and Auditor's Report**<br>❖ Reported to Board 01/12/08<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Service Plan 2008-2011**<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 01/02/08<br><br>Key Performance Indicator information and Electoral Registration Performance Standards information is now collected by Scottish Government and Electoral Commission respectively on an all Scotland basis. This information is available on request or is published by the relevant organisation. | 3 | |
| | 2.6 Ensure Joint Board as a | **Policies on LVJB web site** | 3 | |

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| | whole is open and accessible to community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so | **Freedom of Information Page on web site**<br>❖ LVJB Model Publication Scheme (May 2004)<br><br>**Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy** (January 2005)<br>❖ Published on web site<br><br>**Data Protection Act** | | |
| 3 Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff | 3.1 Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making | **Scheme of Delegation**<br>❖ Published on web site<br>❖ Approved at Board meeting 08/03/04<br><br>Within the organisation Joint Consultative Committee meetings are held on a 6 weekly basis with trade union representatives. These meetings are minuted and minutes are published on staff intranet. The trade union receives all Board papers and reports prior to Board meeting dates. Opportunity is afforded prior to every Board meeting for trade union consultation via the Joint Consultative Group if requested.<br><br>In addition to the Management Group | **3** | |

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| | | meetings, monthly Team Briefings take place throughout the organisation between section line managers and their staff. | | |

**Scoring – The Joint Board's arrangements should be scored on a scale of 1 – 4**

**1** – Not compliant with local code requirements

**2** – Partially compliant with local code requirements

**3** – Fully compliant with the requirements of the local code

**4** – Exceeds the requirements of the local code.