



## **Good governance: the GCC approach**

### **Introduction**

Governance is the term used to describe the systems and processes a body such as the GCC uses to lead the organisation. Good governance means effective leadership by the Council in carrying out its statutory functions in the best interests of the public. It achieves this by setting the strategic direction, taking account above all of the public interest, involving other stakeholders and key interest groups, putting in place effective systems of control and processes for delegation and holding the executive to account.

The GCC plans to achieve good governance through the consistent application of seven key principles

- Leadership
- Control
- High performance
- Review and renewal
- Delegation
- High ethical standards
- Openness and accountability

### **Principle 1**

#### **Leadership**

The organisation is led and controlled by an effective Council that collectively ensures delivery of its statutory purpose, sets its strategic direction and determines and upholds its values. The supporting principles are:

#### **The Role of the Council**

Members have and must accept ultimate and collective responsibility for directing the affairs of the organisation, determining its desired outcomes and outputs in support of its purpose and values, ensuring it is financially viable, well-run and delivering the outcomes for which it has been established.

#### **Strategic Direction**

Members should be forward and outward looking, focussing on the future, assessing the environment and setting strategy. The means by which the outcomes and outputs are achieved should be a matter for the chief executive and staff, working within Council policy.

## Principle 2

### **Control**

The Members as a Council are collectively responsible and accountable for ensuring and monitoring that the organisation is performing well and complies with all its obligations. The supporting principles are:

#### **Compliance**

The Council must ensure that the organisation complies with its own and any other relevant legislation.

#### **Internal Controls**

The Council must maintain and regularly review the organisation's system of internal controls, performance reporting, policies and procedures.

#### **Prudence**

The Council must act prudently and with probity to protect the assets and property of the organisation, and ensure that they are used to deliver the organisation's objectives.

#### **Managing Risk**

The Council must regularly review the risks to which the organisation is subject, and take action to mitigate identified risks.

#### **Equality and Diversity**

The Council must ensure that it upholds and applies the principles of equality and diversity in all aspects of its performance.

### Principle 3

#### **High Performance**

The Council and its statutory Committees must have clear responsibilities and functions, and must be composed and organised to discharge them effectively and to hold the executive to account. The supporting principles are:

#### **Members' duties and responsibilities**

Members of Council and statutory Committees must understand their duties and responsibilities and must have a statement or statutory instrument defining them.

The respective roles and responsibilities of the Council and of its statutory committees shall be clearly stated and action taken to realise them in practice.

This shall include measures to secure the accountability to the Council of the fitness to practise committees for their performance while respecting the independence from the Council of these committees in their decision-making. The addendum to this policy makes explicit the collective responsibilities of the Council to the committees.

#### **The Effective Council**

The Council must organise its work to ensure that it makes the most effective use of the time, skills and knowledge of Members.

#### **Information and advice**

Members of Council must ensure that they receive the advice and information they need to make good decisions and fulfil their control and monitoring functions.

As its chief advisor, the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Council, both collectively and individually, has the information and advice necessary to carry out its responsibilities.

#### **Skills and Experience**

The members of Council and statutory Committees should have the necessary range of skills, experience and knowledge.

#### **Development, Support and Appraisal**

Members of Council must ensure that they and members of the statutory Committees receive the necessary induction, training, appraisal and ongoing support needed to discharge their duties.

#### **The Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive is accountable to the Council for achievement of the organisation's outcomes and outputs. In assessing the extent to which these have been achieved, the Council must have pre-determined criteria which are known to the Chief Executive and staff.

The Chief Executive is expected to be proactive in accounting for her/his stewardship to the Council.

The Council must make proper arrangements for the support, appraisal, development and remuneration of its Chief Executive.

## Principle 4

### **Review and Renewal**

The Council must periodically review its own and the organisation's effectiveness, and take any necessary steps to ensure that both continue to work well. The supporting principles are

#### **Performance Appraisal**

The Council must regularly review and assess its own performance and that of individual members.

#### **Review**

The Council must periodically carry out strategic reviews of all aspects of the organisation's work, and use the results to inform positive change and innovation.

#### **Renewal and Recruitment**

The Council must have a strategy for its own renewal. Recruitment of new members must be open, and focused on creating a diverse and effective Council.

## Principle 5

### **Delegation**

The Council must set out the function of non-statutory Committees, Working Groups and the Chief Executive in clear delegated authorities, and must monitor their performance. The supporting principles are:

#### **Clarity of Roles**

The Council must define the roles and responsibilities of the Chair in writing.

#### **Terms of Reference**

The Council must set clear terms of reference for committees and working groups making clear what delegated authority, if any, they have.

#### **Effective Delegation**

The Council must ensure that the Chief Executive has sufficient delegated authority to discharge his or her duties. All delegated authority must have clear limits relating to budgetary and other matters.

#### **Monitoring**

All delegated authorities must be subject to regular monitoring by the Council.

## Principle 6

### **High ethical standards**

The Council and individual members must act according to high ethical standards and ensure that the Nolan principles of public life are upheld. The supporting principles are:

#### **Selflessness and objectivity**

Members must take decisions solely in the public interest. They must not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or friends. Decisions should be made solely on their merits.

#### **Integrity**

Members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their duties.

#### **Honesty**

Members must identify and promptly declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest affecting them.

There must be clear guidelines for receipt of gifts or hospitality by members.

## Principle 7

### **Openness and accountability**

The Council must be open, responsive and accountable to the public and its other key stakeholders and interest groups. The supporting principles are

#### **Communication and Consultation**

The Council must identify those with a legitimate interest in its work (stakeholders), and ensure that there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with them about the organisation's achievements and work.

#### **Openness and Accountability**

The Council must be open and accountable to stakeholders about its own work, and the governance of the organisation. It should give reasons for its decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **Stakeholder involvement**

The Council must encourage and enable the engagement of key stakeholders in the organisation's planning and decision-making.

## Addendum

- 1 The Council will not intervene in or seek to influence decisions made by the Investigating, Professional Conduct and Health Committees on individual cases.
- 2 Where it judges appropriate, the Council will issue general guidance to assist the committees in their responsibility to act in the public interest when making decisions on individual cases. The committees are expected to take full account of the Council's guidance as it applies in their view in the particular circumstances of each case.
- 3 Before deciding guidance to the committees, the Council will consult the committees and take account of their views.
- 4 The Council will appraise, train, develop and support committee members for the effective performance of their responsibilities.
- 5 From time to time the Council will seek and consider the views of the committees on how best to improve the delivery and performance of the Council's fitness to practise function.
- 6 The Council will monitor and evaluate the performance of its fitness to practise responsibilities including the performance of the Investigating, Professional Conduct and Health Committees. This will be done openly through the consideration of management information and independent audit (including the decisions and feedback of the Council for Health Regulatory Excellence). The committees will be consulted on issues which arise.
- 7 The Council will follow fair and equitable procedures to address concerns that may be raised in relation to the performance or conduct of an individual committee member or which are raised by a committee member in respect of the Council or a member of its staff.

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