

New Framework for local authority governance

The new and updated CIPFA/SOLACE governance Framework for local authorities has been launched at CIPFA's annual conference. The Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' is aimed at ensuring that UK local authorities can achieve the highest standards of service delivery and management performance.

Developed by local government practitioners and their representative and regulatory bodies working together, the Framework wholly updates the original CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance' published in 2001. It takes account of key developments in local authority governance since then including the vision of local government outlined in the October White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and the developments in the devolved administrations.

In particular, the revised Framework includes additional detail and emphasis on :

- strong and clear political arrangements and the need for effective dialogue and engagement with the public
- working in partnership and strategic and community leadership issues
- the role of audit and standards committees.

A particular feature of this Framework is that it places high standards of conduct at the heart of good governance. It will also act as a renewed impetus for local authorities to develop their own codes and review mechanisms and to identify their own particular strengths and priorities for improvement.

Steve Freer, Chief Executive at Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), said:

“The revised Framework emphasises the need for governance arrangements which drive high performance in local government rather than simply compliance with due process. It underlines the importance of effective working across the two top teams – the political leadership and the officer team. And it also stresses the need to ensure that good governance principles actively shape the work which the authority carries out through partnerships and other collaborative arrangements.”

Mike Bennett, Assistant Director General of Society of Local Authority Chief Executive (SOLACE), said:

“The Framework shows how good governance is fundamental to good performance. Getting good governance right means being focused on what the authority is trying to achieve and aligning the rest of the organization behind that. “