

GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

Organisation: Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce

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Document Prepared By: CSR Complete

1. Introduction

Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance and corporate responsibility. As a professional services provider operating across the Midlands region, the organisation recognises that effective governance is essential to delivering consistent value to our members, stakeholders, and the wider business community we serve.

This Governance and Responsibility Policy sets out the framework through which the organisation operates, the principles that guide decision making, and the mechanisms by which we ensure accountability and transparency in all activities. The policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, board members, and anyone acting on behalf of Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce.

The effective operation of the organisation depends upon clear definition of roles, transparent decision making processes, and regular monitoring of our performance against stated objectives. This policy establishes the structures, processes, and responsibilities necessary to achieve these aims. It reflects our commitment to operating with integrity and in accordance with all applicable legislation and regulatory requirements within the United Kingdom.

2. Governance Structure

2.1 Organisational Leadership

Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce operates under a governance structure comprising a Chief Executive Officer and a Board of Directors. The Board provides strategic direction, sets policy, and ensures effective oversight of the organisation's activities. Board members are appointed through a formal process that ensures appropriate skills, experience, and diversity of perspective.

The Chief Executive Officer holds responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and for implementing the strategic decisions made by the Board. The Chief Executive reports directly to the Board and provides regular updates on operational performance, financial management, and progress against agreed objectives.

2.2 Board Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- a) Setting the strategic direction and vision for the organisation in line with the charitable or not for profit objects, where applicable;
- b) Approving all major policies that govern the operation of the organisation;
- c) Ensuring that appropriate financial controls and audit procedures are in place;
- d) Approving the annual budget and monitoring financial performance throughout the year;
- e) Ensuring that the organisation complies with all relevant legislation, including employment law, charity law (where applicable), and data protection requirements;
- f) Appointing the Chief Executive Officer and reviewing their performance on an annual basis;
- g) Overseeing the recruitment and performance management of senior staff;
- h) Ensuring that the organisation maintains appropriate insurance cover and risk management procedures;

- i) Safeguarding the assets and reputation of the organisation;
- j) Ensuring that appropriate governance and compliance procedures are maintained and documented.

2.3 Board Composition and Meetings

The Board shall comprise a minimum of five directors and a maximum of twelve directors. Board members should possess a range of skills, experience, and backgrounds relevant to the operations and strategic objectives of the organisation. Board meetings shall be held a minimum of four times per calendar year, with additional meetings convened as required to address urgent matters.

All Board meetings shall be conducted according to formal standing orders, with minutes recorded and retained according to the organisation's document retention policy. Board members have a duty to declare any potential conflicts of interest at the commencement of each meeting, and conflicts shall be recorded in the minutes.

2.4 Chief Executive Officer Role

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- a) Implementing Board decisions and strategic plans;
- b) Managing the day to day operations of the organisation;
- c) Managing staff recruitment, development, and performance management;
- d) Preparing financial reports and business plans for Board approval;
- e) Ensuring compliance with all applicable policies and procedures;
- f) Managing relationships with key stakeholders and members;
- g) Representing the organisation in dealings with external partners and regulatory bodies;
- h) Reporting to the Board on organisational performance and any significant risks or issues.

2.5 Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff have responsibilities within the governance framework. Managers are responsible for implementing policies, managing their teams, and escalating issues appropriately. All staff are required to comply with organisational policies and procedures, and to report any breaches or concerns through appropriate channels.

The organisation maintains clear job descriptions for all positions, which outline individual responsibilities and reporting lines. Performance expectations are agreed annually and reviewed regularly throughout the year.

3. Accountability

3.1 Financial Accountability

Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce maintains robust financial controls to ensure that all funds are used appropriately and in accordance with the organisation's stated objectives. The organisation operates according to an annual budget approved by the Board before the commencement of each financial year.

All expenditure is approved according to a delegated authority schedule. The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to approve expenditure up to a specified level, with higher value items requiring Board approval. Monthly financial reports are prepared and reviewed by the Board to ensure that expenditure remains within budget and that appropriate value for money is achieved.

An external independent audit is conducted annually to verify the accuracy of financial statements and the adequacy of financial controls. The auditor's report is presented to the Board and any recommendations are actioned appropriately.

3.2 Compliance and Risk Management

The organisation has established a risk management framework to identify, assess, and mitigate risks to the business. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for maintaining a risk register that is reviewed quarterly by the Board. Risks are categorised by likelihood and potential impact, and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.

The organisation maintains compliance with all applicable legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, employment law, health and safety law, and any sector specific regulations. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for maintaining awareness of changing legislation and ensuring that organisational policies and procedures are updated accordingly.

3.3 Whistleblowing and Concerns

Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce encourages all staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to raise concerns about potential breaches of policy, impropriety, or unsafe practices. The organisation maintains a confidential whistleblowing policy that allows individuals to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

Concerns may be raised with the Chief Executive Officer, a Board member, or through an external whistleblowing service where anonymity is required. All concerns are investigated promptly and appropriately, and findings are reported to the Board.

3.4 Conflicts of Interest

All Board members and senior staff are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest. A conflicts of interest register is maintained and reviewed annually. Where a conflict exists, the affected individual recuses themselves from relevant discussions and decisions.

The organisation recognises that some individuals may have legitimate external roles or interests. Such positions are permitted provided they are declared, do not compromise the individual's ability to perform their role within Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce, and do not create a financial or reputational risk to the organisation.

3.5 Member and Stakeholder Accountability

As a professional services provider operating within the business community, Staffordshire Chambers Of Commerce is accountable to its members and stakeholders. The organisation provides regular communication regarding activities, achievements, and financial performance. Annual member meetings are held to review progress and gather feedback.

Complaints from members or stakeholders are handled according to a formal procedure. Complaints are investigated promptly, and complainants are kept informed of progress. The

Board reviews complaints regularly to identify any systemic issues that require attention.

4. Monitoring and Review

4.1 Performance Monitoring

The Board monitors organisational performance against a set of agreed key performance indicators. These indicators cover member satisfaction, financial performance, operational efficiency, and progress towards strategic objectives. Performance data is presented to the Board at each meeting, allowing for timely identification of issues or areas requiring improvement.

The Chief Executive Officer provides a detailed annual report to the Board that summarises performance across all key areas and highlights significant achievements and challenges during the year.

4.2 Policy Review and Update

All organisational policies are subject to formal review on a periodic basis. This Governance and Responsibility Policy shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, best practice, or the organisation's operating environment.

Any changes to policies are approved by the Board before implementation. Updated policies are communicated to all staff and volunteers, and training is provided where necessary to ensure understanding and compliance.

4.3 External Audit and Assurance

An independent external audit is conducted annually to provide assurance regarding financial management and the adequacy of internal controls. The auditor meets with the Board to discuss findings and recommendations, which are documented and actioned appropriately.

The organisation may commission additional external reviews or assurance work on specific areas where expertise is required or where particular risks are identified.

4.4 Regulatory Compliance Monitoring

The organisation maintains awareness of regulatory requirements applicable to its operations. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for monitoring changes in legislation and guidance, and for ensuring that the organisation remains compliant.

An annual compliance checklist is completed to verify that all relevant legal and regulatory requirements are being met. Any areas of non compliance are identified and addressed promptly.

4.5 Policy Effectiveness Review

This policy shall be reviewed on the anniversary of its effective date, or sooner if significant changes occur that necessitate earlier review. The review process shall involve the Board, the Chief Executive Officer, and senior staff, ensuring that the policy remains fit for purpose and reflects current best practice.

The next scheduled review of this Governance and Responsibility Policy shall take place on 22 May 2027.

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