



POLICY EBS-48: Accountability and Transparency Policy

Employee and Business Services

Approval Date: February 12, 2008
Approval Authority: Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, S.O. 2001, C25, Section 270
Council, Resolution 12
Effective Date: February 12, 2008
Revision Date/s:

Purpose:

The Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, requires all municipalities to adopt and maintain an Accountability and Transparency Policy. The purpose of this policy is to outline the manner in which Norfolk County will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions and that its actions are transparent to the public. The policy provides guidance on how Norfolk County ensures municipal governance is conducted in an accountable and transparent manner, with emphasis on openness, ethics, performance outcomes and fiscal responsibility.

Policy Statement

The policy of Norfolk County Council is to be accountable and transparent in the operations of Council, its Committees and its administration. Norfolk County Council acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner.

Norfolk County will promote accountable and transparent municipal governance guided by the following principles:

1. Decision-making will be open, fair and transparent;
2. Municipal operations will be conducted in an ethical and accountable manner;
3. Financial resources and physical infrastructure shall be managed in an efficient and effective manner;
4. Municipal information will be accessible so that it is consistent with legislative requirements;
5. Inquiries, concerns and complaints will be responded to in a timely manner;
6. Public access and participation will be encouraged to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;

7. An open, responsive meeting process will ensure that citizens have access to and awareness of the Council/Committee business being discussed.
8. Every new delegation of power or authority will include appropriate accountability mechanisms.

Definitions:

Accountability:

The principle that the County is obligated to demonstrate and take responsibility for its actions, decisions and policies and that is answerable to the public at large.

Transparency:

The principle that the County will conduct its business in an accessible, clear and visible manner and its activities are open to examination by its stakeholders.

Corporate Values:

The Norfolk County Mission, Vision, Values and the Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan, all have underlying accountability and transparency principles which help to further promote this policy.

Norfolk County Mission:

Working together with our community to provide quality services

Norfolk County Vision:

Our efforts will enhance the quality of life for all those who live, work and play in our community. Through the cooperation and dedication of staff and council we will respond to the current needs of our community and plan for the challenges of the future.

Norfolk County Core Values:

We work together to provide quality services through:

- Honesty, integrity and respect
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Participatory leadership
- Effective communications
- Lifelong learning
- Accountability and responsibility
- Safe and ethical practices
- Partnership development
- Professional excellence
- Valuing of employees

Norfolk County Strategic Plan:

The following six strategic issues form the basis of the County's Strategic Plan.

- Community Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Community Values & Identity
- Corporate Infrastructure
- Financial Sustainability
- Human Resources

Implementation Procedure:

Application of Policy

This policy shall apply equally to the political process and decision making and to the administrative management of the County. It includes all operations of the County.

Norfolk County Strategic Plan

The Mission, Vision and Values of the Corporation which provides the foundation for its governance and operations shall continue to promote accountability and transparency. Council shall annually review and develop its Strategic Plan on this basis.

Norfolk County Policies and Procedures

The County shall develop and approve policies, procedures and practices that contribute to creating an open, accountable and transparent public organization. All policies and procedures shall be developed, reviewed and monitored on the basis of the principles of accountability and transparency outlined in this policy.

Legislated Requirements

Norfolk County and its operations/governance are accountable and transparent to their stakeholders by fulfilling various legislative responsibilities. The County shall conduct its business within its jurisdiction in accordance with the legislative requirements of Provincial Statutes, Ontario Regulations and any other applicable law.

Fiscal Accountability and Reporting:

Norfolk County and its operations/governance are accountable and transparent to stakeholders in its financial management. Its policies, procedures and practices shall be put in place and monitored to ensure sound financial management and fiscal accountability.

Open Government:

Norfolk County is open and accountable to stakeholders by providing governance in an open manner through communication, consultation and collaboration. All policies, procedures and practices of the County shall ensure that its operations are transparent and that mechanisms are in place to make residents aware of how decisions are made and carried out and are able to participate in the decision making process.

All meetings of Council and its Committees shall be open to the public unless authorized to be closed under the provisions of the Municipal Act.

County information shall be readily available to the public subject to the requirements of the Municipal Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act.

Internal Accountability and Ethical Standards

Norfolk County's administrative practices shall be in accordance with Norfolk County's core values outlined in this policy. Its policies and procedures shall ensure internal accountability and promote the high ethical standards of the County.