

Delivering 2030 governance, now

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For the last few years the Good Governance Institute, through the work of the National Commission, has been investigating the importance, role and future of good governance in the public sector and who needs to do what by when between now and 2030.

This work has been guided by the belief that a strong and effective public sector has already made a unique and necessary contribution to UK public life and is essential for a fair, sustainable and equitable future.

The UK public sector has changed significantly over the past 150 years. In fact, it has changed since the Commission started its work four years ago. From its inception, the NHS developed as a multitude of small organisations, each with a specific purpose.

The big change now is a focus on population-health and wellbeing that requires multi-faceted, multi-agency organisation with numerous stakeholders to collaborate in systems at a national, regional, local, institutional as well as individual level.

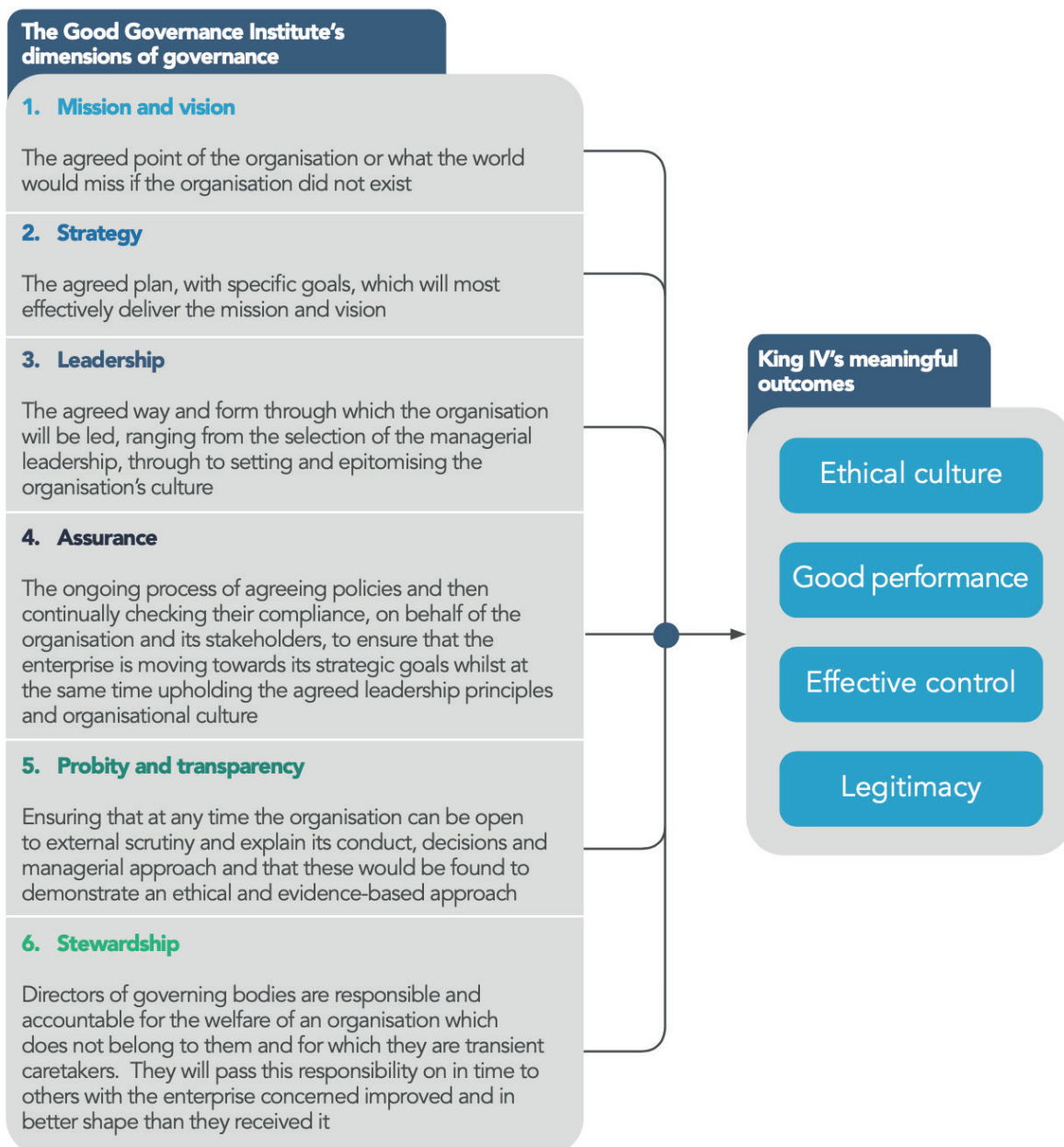
In the next few critical years to 2030, the public sector will need to continue to adapt to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow and a new collaborative form of governance that allows for compromise will be central to how well it does.

The three key pillars of the future of governance, or what we should now call modern governance - place, digital and citizens - have provided the basis for the Commission's framework of enquiry. These pillars capture the central issues facing the public sector between now and 2030 and have been used to explore a range of topics that are essential to good governance, including: purpose, fairness, sustainability, diversity, ethics, accountability, policy, leadership, preparedness, and regulation.



- **Place** focuses on issues that are specific to a locality, community or neighbourhood. At the level of place, public sector organisations and partners come together to achieve local social, environmental and economic outcomes reflecting the diversity of their staff and residents.
- **Digital** covers technological transformation, artificial intelligence, cyber threats, machine learning, public engagement and innovation. The future of good governance must go beyond organisational transformation and tackle issues of legitimacy, ethics, trust, power and data use and ownership.
- **Citizens** relates to ordinary people’s engagement with governance and their changing relationship with public institutions. Public sector governance is struggling to make legitimate its authority and embrace the consequences of increasingly engaged citizens. We have explored whether there are alternatives to the current models.

Modern governance must be centred around these pillars and it must be outcome led.



So what would King IV outcomes look like in 2030?

Ethical culture.

By 2030 there will be a shift in thinking towards a just learning culture, where appointments and decisions have been scrutinised for equity and fairness. Organisations that cannot demonstrate improvements in society and the environment must question their legitimacy to operate.

Good performance.

By 2030 public services need to be performing within their budgets. This may mean a reduction in levels and types of service or a rethinking of who can provide them. There will be capacity in the system to allow for innovation and experiment and honest attempts to improve, fail and learn should be rewarded not punished.

Effective control.

Most public services are out of control. They do not meet expected norms of equity and fairness and assurance is patchy and unaligned. NHS budgets are consistently broken and local government will simply shut down vital services to remain solvent. By 2030, all public services will be required to deliver balanced budgets and service norms drawing down increased local rate or national tax levies.

Legitimacy.

There need to be new ways of affirming the legitimacy of boards and their decision. This should not be a populist veto as suggested for planning decisions but support for Evidence-based decision-making and prioritisation recognising that whilst the Human Right Act supports access for all it does not guarantee a level of service beyond the capacity of the state to deliver.

How can GGI help? We can decipher, guide and advise along every step of the way what needs to be done next, by whom and how.

Through its work since 2018 the Commission - steered by a group of commissioners at the heart of public sector governance, and with input from a much larger group of senior leaders - has explored what modern governance is and what it will mean for public sector organisations – and indeed those of every sector. It has outlined the challenges and opportunities for the public sector and produced evidence-based reports and stimulus papers offering recommendations for the public sector. We have also hosted events bringing together leaders from across society to explore the role of governance in securing a positive future for the public sector.

The Commission will soon be publishing its latest report, which will:

- explore in greater detail the three pillars of modern governance
- set out in more detail the future of governance and what King IV's outcomes should look like in 2030
- provide a roadmap to 2030, to support whole system thinking
- include helpful tools to support public sector organisations moving towards modern governance, to enable governance between organisations
- establish roles and responsibilities for key public sector bodies, to help support and foster a culture of collaboration and compromise.

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The Good Governance Institute has worked in every ICS in the country. We provide wide-ranging support for leaders of organisations . Through our institute work we bring peer groups together to facilitate discussion and share knowledge via our extensive programme of events - all of which are free - and through our library of tools, articles, guides and insights. Alongside our paid consultancy we also offer free advice through our advisory service.

If you'd like to discuss how we can help your organisation navigate the challenges and opportunities of modern governance, email advice@good-governance.org.uk.

Further reading list:

Three Kings videos
People and place paper