

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Wednesday, 25th April, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor M Harris in the Chair
Councillors D Blackburn, E Minkin,
K Wakefield and J L Carter (as substitute
for Councillor A Carter)

Co-optee Mike Wilkinson

Apologies Councillor A Carter

71 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents in accordance with Procedure Rule 25 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

72 Exclusion of Public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

73 Late Items

There were no late items admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.

74 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of personal / prejudicial interest for the purpose of section 81(3) of the Local Government Act 2000 and paragraphs 9 to 12 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

75 Minutes

RESOLVED – Members resolved:

- that the minutes of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee held on the 31st January 2007 be approved as a correct record; and
- to request a report to the next meeting of the Committee regarding arrangements for the Committee to meet with the External Auditors in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) 2005 publication "Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities.

76 Minutes of the Standards Committee

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on the 14th February 2007 be noted.

77 Monitoring of the Personnel Appeal Panel Arrangements for January to December 2006

The Chief Officer (Human Resources) submitted a report regarding the operation of the arrangements for the Personnel Appeal Panel which hears appeals against dismissal and stage 3 grievances.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring that information regarding the operation of these arrangements and the outcome of appeals continues to be reported to Members and made public.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- note the contents of the report; and
- request that the Committee receive an annual update regarding the operation of the personnel panel arrangements to include comparable information from other Core City Local Authorities.

78 Local Government Ombudsman Performance Report

The Chief Customer Services Officer submitted a report updating Members on complaints received from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) for the period December 2006 – February 2007. The report also advised Members of the action plan in place to deal with the stockpile of cases currently with the Ombudsman.

Members noted their dissatisfaction regarding the backlog of cases with the Ombudsman.

Members particularly discussed:

- the action being taken to resolve issues around the Choice Based Lettings policy; and
- how departments ensure that cases are reviewed in order to ensure similar complaints are not received in future.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to note the performance information and issues raised in the report.

79 Update Report on Risk Management

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing the regular update on the status of the implementation of risk management and business continuity management across the Council.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting to be held on Friday 29th June 2007.

Members discussed the importance of communicating changes to the Council's structure, as a result of the Change Programme, to all Members and the public.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- note the report on the Council's risk management and business continuity arrangements; and
- request that the Corporate Risk Register be made available to Members of the Committee.

80 Compliance with Laws and Regulations - Annual Report for May 2006 - May 2007

The Chief Legal Services Officer submitted a report providing the annual update on the monitoring arrangements that operate to provide assurance that action is taken to ensure compliance with all reported legislative changes.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to note the report and the work which has been completed so far.

81 Constitution - Annual Review / Amendments

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report recommending a number of amendments to the Constitution for consideration at the Annual Meeting of Council on the 24th May 2007.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to recommend to Council the following amendments to the Constitution:

- the removal from Article 4 of the Constitution of the Food Law Enforcement Plan as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report;
- the removal from Article 4 of the Constitution of the Plan and Strategy which comprise the Housing Investment Programme as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report;
- the addition of a Council Procedure Rule 14.5(c), to allow a nominated member to exercise summing up rights in the absence of an Executive Member / Chair, as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report;
- the deletion of Council Procedure Rules 14.6(i) and (iii), to clarify when a Member may speak twice in a debate, as proposed in paragraph 3.2 of the report;
- an amendment to paragraph 2.1 of the Appointments to Outside Body Procedure Rules as detailed in paragraph 3.13 of the report, to more accurately reflect current practice;
- an amendment to paragraph 4.2 of the Appointments to Outside Body Procedure Rules as detailed in paragraph 3.14 of the report to avoid the potential for a conflict of interest for Members appointed to an organisation; and
- the addition of a paragraph at 4.10 of the Appointments to Outside Body Procedure Rules as detailed in paragraph 3.15 of the report to clarify the period of an appointment.

Members also resolved that officers give further consideration to the proposal regarding an additional Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule to deal with recommendations outside of the formal inquiry process.

82 Work Programme

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report notifying Members of the updated work programme and seeking comments from the Committee regarding any additional items.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to note the work programme.