

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Wednesday, 28th November, 2007

PRESENT: Councillor J Bale in the Chair
Councillors D Blackburn, E Minkin,
C Campbell and G Driver

Co-optee Mike Wilkinson

Apologies Councillors B Gettings

41 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

42 Exclusion of Public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

43 Late Items

There were no additional items, however five late appendices, and a document making amendments to appendix 3, to the report on the review of polling districts and polling places (minute 47) were circulated after the despatch of the agenda.

These appendices were provided late as the information contained within them was only available after the agenda was despatched. The Chair admitted these late documents to the agenda.

44 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Driver declared a personal interest in item 8 (minute 48) by virtue of his membership of the Groundwork Leeds Trust board and the Neighbourhood Renewal Board - Aire Valley (both partnerships listed in the report). Councillor Bale also declared a personal interest in the same item by virtue of his membership of Community Links.

Councillor Driver declared a personal interest in item 8 (minute 49) by virtue of his membership of the Neighbourhood Renewal Board - Aire Valley.

45 Minutes

Members requested an update on Minute 39 and were informed that the relevant reports back had either been circulated electronically or were scheduled for consideration at a future meeting.

RESOLVED – Members resolved that the minutes of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on the 27th September 2007 be approved as a correct record.

46 Minutes of the Standards Committee

RESOLVED – Members resolved to note the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on the 10th October 2007.

47 Review of Polling Districts, and Polling Places

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report regarding the review of polling districts and polling places.

Councillor Procter and Councillor Taggart were present at the meeting for the purpose of responding to any questions.

Members noted:

- the large number of representations submitted and the extensive work that has been undertaken to respond to the submissions;
- that the current review of polling districts and places is required to be completed prior to 31st December 2007; and
- that under the Scheme at Appendix 4 there will continue to be wide disparities in the facilities for polling made available to voters in different parts of the city.

Members also particularly discussed two specific proposals in relation to 101 CAL Sheepscar WMC and KII Kirkstall Brewery site. Discussion of these proposals included consideration of the broader questions of licensed premises and gated communities.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to:

- approve the Scheme as set out in Appendix 4 with the following exceptions:
 - that the polling station at Sheepscar is detailed as being 'within the curtilage' of the WMC and that the Kirkstall Brewery Site is removed from the scheme; and
- instruct officers to report to the next scheduled meeting (February) of the Committee on:
 1. how the process of reviewing polling districts and places may be improved;
 2. how, within electoral law and guidance, the concern about disparities can be addressed; and
 3. their recommendations following their investigations and consultations on those polling districts and places which remain under consideration (including Kirkstall Brewery) and such further

recommendations with regard to polling districts and places as are appropriate taking into account 1. and 2. above.

48 Governance arrangements for significant partnerships

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report informing Members of progress made in relation to the governance arrangements of the council's significant partnerships.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- note the council has now identified its significant partnerships as set out in appendix one to the report;
- note the results of the base-line assessment of the governance arrangements for those partnerships;
- note the guidance circulated to directors (appendix three); and
- request that officers give further consideration to the relationship between the council's scrutiny function and its significant partnerships.

49 External audit risk review on EASEL regeneration project

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report introducing the context for the KPMG review of open-book accounting. The report also explained how the findings of the risk reviews and an additional value-added workshop on these issues will be used to directly benefit the long term effectiveness of the EASEL initiative.

Lynsey Simenton from KPMG was also present for this item.

Members particularly discussed:

- the need to ensure a clear separation between the role of Leeds City Council officers appointed to the EASEL board and those officers responsible for monitoring performance on behalf of the council; and
- the need to balance robust governance arrangements against the risk of developing a framework which could prevent the council pursuing its priorities.

RESOLVED – Members resolved:

- to note the findings of the risk review of the EASEL regeneration project;
- to note the benefits to the council provided by the report and EASEL workshop; and
- to request a further report back regarding the developing governance arrangements for EASEL.

50 Report of KPMG: External Auditors - Children & Young People's Agenda Partnership working

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report presenting the report from the council's external auditors KPMG on the 'Children and Young People's Agenda: Partnership Working'. The report includes an action plan

identifying the work the council will do to respond to the recommendations made in the external audit report.

Lynsey Simenton from KPMG was also present.

Members particularly discussed:

- the importance of conducting case-studies so that relevant people understand how the various elements of the Children's Trust arrangements operate in practice; and
- governance arrangements at Area level, especially with regard to the inter-agency management of complex cases and their associated risks.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- note the content of the report, its recommendations and the action plan detailing the planned response; and
- request that a further report regarding the governance of children's centres within schools is received either by Corporate Governance and Audit Committee or the Childrens' Services Scrutiny Board.

51 Accessibility of Governance Information on the Leeds City Council Website

The Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) submitted a report presenting to Members the changes that have been made to the Leeds City Council internet site to improve both the accessibility and presentation of the public facing elements of the council's democratic services information system, planning decisions and information system; and information on elections.

Members particularly discussed how the internet could be further improved to facilitate more community engagement.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- note the improvements being made to the council's website in respect of governance related information; and
- request a report to a future meeting regarding the development of community websites.

52 Update Report on Risk Management Arrangements

The Director of Resources submitted a report providing a progress report on key risk management and business continuity management development across the council and its strategic partners since the previous report in June 2007.

Members particularly discussed the research that had been undertaken into the publication of corporate risk registers.

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- note and approve the progress report on the council's risk management and business continuity management arrangements; and
- to request that further consideration be given to the publication of Leeds City Council's risk register.

53 Update on 'Delivering Successful Change'

RESOLVED – Members resolved to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.

54 Half-Year Internal Audit Report

RESOLVED – Members resolved to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.

55 The Corporate Governance Statement Action Plan

RESOLVED – Members resolved to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.

56 Work Programme

RESOLVED – Members resolved to:

- defer consideration of this item to the next meeting; and
- request that an additional meeting of the Committee is arranged for January 2008 for consideration of deferred items.