

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Wednesday, 14th April, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor J Bale in the Chair

Councillors G Driver, G Latty, N Taggart,
C Campbell, G Kirkland, A Lowe and
A Blackburn as substitute for D Blackburn

Co-optee Mr M Wilkinson

Apologies Councillors D Blackburn, P Grahame and
T Leadley

114 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

115 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

116 Late Items

There were no late items added to the agenda.

117 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Driver declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 (Minute 121 refers) as a Member of the Aire Valley Homes ALMO.

Councillor Latty declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 (Minute 121 refers) as a Member of the ALMO Outer North West Area Panel.

118 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors D Blackburn, P Grahame and T Leadley.

119 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - The minutes of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on 17th March 2010 be approved as a correct record.

120 Matters Arising

Further to minute 56 (Six Monthly Update Report on Risk Management), Mr M Wilkinson asked what action had been made regarding the request to have the Committee's recommendation regarding the publication of the Council's Corporate Risk Map considered by Executive Board before the end of the current municipal year.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) advised that it had not been considered at the April Executive Board but she would make enquiries

121 Fraudulent Tenancies

The Strategic Landlord and the Housing Policy and Monitoring Manager presented a report which informed the Committee of the work undertaken by the Communities and Local Government Social Housing Fraud Initiative. The report also informed the Committee of policy development and performance information regarding social housing fraud.

Members particularly discussed the options available to the Council to counter tenants who sublet Council properties. Also discussed, was the availability of resources to address subletting and the accessibility of the service that responds to reports of subletting.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to:

- (a) note the report; and
- (b) request that a report be submitted to the Committee to outline the types of irregularities to identify where tenancy fraud may be occurring and the information trigger points within the Council.

Councillor A Lowe entered the meeting during the discussion of this item at 10.10 am.

Councillor A Blackburn entered the meeting during the discussion of this item at 10.15 am.

122 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy

The Head of Property Finance and Technology presented a report which outlined the Council's proposed policy on covert surveillance conducted within the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

Members discussed the report in detail and use of RIPA as an investigatory need to use as a last resort. Members, though, agreed that in certain circumstances covert surveillance is an essential tool for gathering evidence where it is believed laws are being broken. Members further considered:

- the level of authorisation required to sign off a RIPA request; and

- which elected body should receive the annual report and their view was that it be this Committee

Members also discussed the draft RIPA policy and agreed that further work be done to make the policy more clearly worded and directly linked to the legislation, including greater emphasis on definitions.

RESOLVED - The Committee resolved to request that a further report be submitted with a revised RIPA policy prior to the policy being considered by the Executive Board.

123 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2009/10

The Corporate Governance Officer introduced a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) which presented the Committee with the first draft of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report for 2009/10.

Members reviewed the Annual Report and suggested amendments that could be made to ensure the report more clearly demonstrated the impact which the Committee's work has had over the municipal year.

During discussion of this item, Councillor Bale thanked Members and officers for their hard work and contributions to the Committee over the past three years of his Chairmanship.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to:

- (a) approve the draft report subject to the amendments suggested; and
- (b) authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to approve the final report prior to it being received at full Council in the new municipal year.

124 Corporate Governance Statement Action Plan

The Corporate Governance Officer presented a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) which updated the Committee on the progress that has been made in implementing the Corporate Governance Statement Action Plan 2009/10.

Members discussed the progress made with the Corporate Governance Statement Action Plan and commented on the importance of focussing on outcomes and impact with regards to the actions contained in the Action Plan.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to note the Corporate Governance Statement Action Plan.

125 Work Programme

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report notifying Members of the draft work programme for the remainder of the 2009/10 and the 2010/11 municipal year.

Members of the Committee expressed their thanks to Councillor Bale for his hard work over the last three years as the Chair, as this was his last Committee meeting.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to note the draft work programme.