

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Wednesday, 12th May, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Latty in the Chair

Councillors M Wilkinson, D Blackburn,
G Driver, P Grahame, G Latty, N Taggart,
C Campbell, G Kirkland, T Leadley and
A Lowe

Co-optee Mr M Wilkinson

Apologies

126 Appointment of The Chair

Due to the resignation from the Council of the sitting Chair a new Chair was required to be elected by the Committee. Councillor G Latty was nominated and seconded for the position of Chair and was un-opposed.

127 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

128 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

129 Late Items

There were no late items added to the agenda.

130 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were declared.

131 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

132 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – The minutes of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on 14th April 2010 be approved as a correct record.

133 Assurance of the Process by Which Planning Decisions are taken by the Council

The Chief Planning Officer presented his report which outlined the arrangements that are in place to underpin the decision making process within the remit of the Chief Planning Officer, these being planning decisions taken by officers under delegated authority. The report also assured the Committee that the operation of the processes in place are accountable, transparent, have integrity and are inclusive.

Members congratulated the Chief Planning Officer on the improving picture in relation to planning decisions. Members discussed the small percentage of planning decisions which get to the Plans Panel. Also discussed was the method for requesting a planning decision to be taken to Plans Panel and the rules that surround this.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to:

- (a) request further information about the comparator percentages of decisions taken by officers under delegated authority at other authorities be provided to members;
- (b) receive a similar report on planning decision making on an annual basis; and
- (c) note the report.

Councillor Grahame entered the meeting during the discussion of this item at 10.20 am.

134 Annual Update on the Council's Risk Management Arrangements

The Principal Risk Management Officer presented a report of the Director of Resources which provided an overview of the Council's key risk management developments over 2009/10 focusing on the period following the six monthly report in November 2009. The report also provided assurance on the strength of risk management arrangements.

Members discussed the report in detail particularly the known risks the Council has and the further work that is being done by the Risk Management Unit to ensure exposure to these is minimised. Members noted that the Executive Board is due to consider, as part of the Annual Report on Risk Management proposals by the Committee for the publication of the risk register.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to:

- (a) note the report and the progress made on embedding risk management across the Council; and
- (b) continue to review and challenge the Council's risk management arrangements and attend risk management training sessions and briefings provided by the Risk Management Unit.

135 Leeds City Region - Emerging Governance Structures

The Head of Regional Policy (Acting) presented a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) which updated the Committee on progress made in establishing the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Board and the Leeds City Region Homes and Communities Agency Board. The report also informed the Committee of the extent to which these Boards have taken account of the governance themes contained within the Governance Framework for Significant Partnerships.

Members raised concerns as to the limited extent to which local elected councillors could contribute to the work of the Leeds City Region. Consideration was given to the potential of elected Members from across the Leeds City Region being given the opportunity to contribute to the work programme other than just Leaders and portfolio holders as is currently the case.

Members also expressed a desire for further work to be undertaken to improve the transparency of the governance arrangements of the various Leeds City Region structures; particularly those relating to the Leeds City Region Employment and Skills Board and the Leeds City Region Homes and Communities Agency Board.

RESOLVED – The Committee resolved to:

- (a) note the progress on establishing decision making arrangements, being developed at the Leeds City Region level, for skills and housing and that a further report was due to be brought addressing the infrastructure required within the Council regarding Members role in shaping the Leeds perspective regarding matters to be considered at City region level ;
- (b) request six monthly reports on the governance arrangements of the Leeds City Region; and
- (c) request that the Committee's concerns be brought to the attention of the Council's appointed nominee to the Leeds City Region Leaders Board.

136 Work Programme

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

Members of the Committee expressed their thanks to Mr Mike Wilkinson for his valued contributions to the Committee as this was his last Committee meeting.

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