

Corporate Governance Committee – 18 December 2006

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Lewin-Harris (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Beaven, Denington, Hall, Lisgo, Meikle, Prior-Sankey,
Mrs Smith, Wedderkopp and Mrs Whitmarsh.

Officers: Ms S Adam (Strategic Director)
Mr P Carter (Financial Services Manager)
Mr B Cleere (Head of Policy and Performance)
Mrs G Croucher (Review Support Officer)
Mr C Gunn (Internal Audit Manager)
Mr P Weaver (Head of Environment and Leisure)

Also Present: Councillor Mrs Bradley

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm)

16. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2006 were taken as read and were signed.

17. Risk Management Strategy

Reference Minute No 13/2006, reported that a Risk Management Strategy had been produced which set out the Council's approach to Risk Management, together with a sharepoint intranet site to form a comprehensive database of Risk Management activity and information.

All major projects would now be subject to the Risk Management process with the appropriate project leader taking responsibility for the project Risk Register. Smaller projects would be assessed if requested by the project leader or CMT.

RESOLVED that the Executive be recommended to adopt the Risk Management Strategy.

18. Review of Project Management Arrangements

Mr Brendan Cleere, Head of Policy and Performance, updated Members with regard to Project Management.

The Corporate Governance Committee would provide an overview rather than look at individual projects. Members would agree standards, monitor the progress made and agree corrective action if necessary on major projects on a six monthly basis.

Members would receive training in Project Management.

RESOLVED that a further report be made to the June 2007 meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee.

19. Section 106 Agreements

Considered report previously circulated, updating the Committee on the Section 106 Agreements entered into by the Council and developers. The report also gave details of the Section 106 monies held. This amounted to £1,213,000.

Section 106 Agreements provided the Council with capital resources needed to meet key priorities, such as the provision of affordable housing, and details of Agreements currently in place were given.

RESOLVED that:-

1. further details of current Section 106 Agreements be made available by the end of January 2007; and
2. a further report be made to the next meeting.

20. Annual Efficiency Statement

Considered report previously circulated, that detailed the progress made by the Council to make efficiency savings each year.

Local Authorities were required to demonstrate 2.5% per annum efficiency gains between 2005/2006 and 2007/2008 when compared to the 2004/2005 budget position. These gains were measured against set financial targets and included both capital and revenue spending.

Progress would be reported through the Annual Efficiency Statement (AES) and would be updated three times a year. The most recent AES submissions showed total expected efficiencies to be well above the targets set and details of the progress made in reaching these targets was submitted.

Prior to submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government, the AES would need to be signed by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

21. Internal Audit – Progress Report

Considered report previously circulated, which provided an update on the progress made against agreed audit recommendations from 2005/2006. The report also detailed the activities of the Internal Audit team for the period September to December 2006.

Reported that 22 audit reviews completed during 2005/2006 had resulted in 177 recommendations being made. Although follow up visits had yet to be

completed for all of these audit areas, summary details of progress against the recommendations was submitted.

Summary details were also submitted of the audits completed from September to December 2006 which included any significant findings or recommendations.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

22. Corporate Governance – Audit Commission Pilot

Considered report previously circulated, requesting the Corporate Governance Committee to support the Council's involvement in pilot Corporate Governance Review Arrangements with the Audit Commission.

The Audit Commission had been developing new arrangements for Corporate Governance inspections in local authorities. They were piloting their new arrangements in several councils and had approached Taunton Deane to assist in the pilot exercise.

All Members and senior managers would be requested to complete a questionnaire on governance matters. The results would help to identify areas that required more attention and if this could be achieved by further training, issuing clearer guidance or rewriting protocols.

The action plan highlighting areas for improvement would assist in the preparation of a Local Code of Corporate Governance, a task that had been outstanding for some time. The results would be available in early 2007.

RESOLVED that the pilot Corporate Governance Review Arrangements with the Audit Commission be agreed.

(The meeting ended at 7.47 p.m.)