

Corporate Governance Committee – 28 June 2010

Present: Councillors Beaven, Coles, Govier, Hall, Henley, Miss James, O'Brien, Thorne, A Wedderkopp, and Wilson.

Officers: Mr R Holwill (Accountant), Ms M Hammond (Strategic Finance Officer), Mr P Fitzgerald (Financial Services Manager), Mr C Gunn (Group Auditor, South West Audit Partnership), Mrs T Meers (Legal and Democratic Services Manager), Mr D Webb (Client and Performance Officer) and Miss N Williams (Administrative Officer)

Also Present: Councillors Morrell, Stuart-Thorn, Mrs Whitmarsh and Williams.
Mr T Brown

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

27. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved that Councillor O'Brien be appointed as Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

28. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Resolved that Councillor Coles be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

29. Apology/Substitution

Apology: Councillors Denington.

Substitution: Councillor Mrs Allgrove for Councillor Denington.

30. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2010 were taken as read and were signed.

31. Statement of Accounts 2009/2010

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the annual Statement of Accounts for 2009/2010 which was required to be approved by the Corporate Governance Committee prior to the accounts being signed by the Council's Section 151 Officer and by the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor O'Brien. The statutory deadline for the signing of the accounts was the end of June.

The 2009/2010 Accounts presented were subject to audit which would shortly be undertaken by the Audit Commission.

The format of the Statement of Accounts had not changed substantially from last year with only some technical accounting amendments when compared to 2008/2009.

A brief presentation was made to Members by the Strategic Finance Officer, Maggie Hammond and the Temporary Accountant, Richard Holwill, on the Statement of Accounts which included information on the following topics:-

- Income and Expenditure Account;
- Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance;
- Statement of Recognised Gains and Losses;
- Balance Sheet;
- Cash Flow Statement.

It was reported that following the conclusion of the audit to be undertaken by the Audit Commission, the Committee would be informed if any significant amendments had arisen.

Resolved that:-

- 1) The Statement of Accounts for 2009/2010 be approved;
- 2) The following determinations in respect of the year ended 31 March 2010 be made:-

Section 42(2)(g) – that £4,220,000 of expenditure for capital purposes, which was financed by grant, be capitalised.

32. Risk Management

Considered report previously circulated, which gave details of the Council's updated Risk Management Strategy.

The original Risk Management Strategy had been approved by the Committee in 2006 and had been reviewed and updated in order to continue the encouragement of best practice in this area. Two new risks had been identified and included, and one had been removed. A new section had been added that would enable planned actions to be included as well as existing control measures.

Details of the updated Risk Management Strategy were submitted for discussion.

Resolved that:-

- 1) the Corporate Risk Register be reviewed
- 2) Progress with Risk Management, the Internal Audit review and the actions planned be noted.

33. Corporate Improvement Plan

Considered report, previously circulated, giving details of the progress made against the Corporate Governance Action Plan.

Each year the Council received a number of reports and assessments which resulted in recommendations for improvement. Individual action plans had proved challenging to manage and monitor and, therefore, an aggregated plan provided the details of the scale of improvements required and progress against them in one place.

The Corporate Governance Action Plan listed 70 actions, details of which were submitted.

Good progress had been made and there were no items off target and a significant increase in the number of actions completed.

Categories where doubts had been expressed about achieving improvement by the target dates were submitted and included the following:-

- Business Continuity – (a) To formulate plans for service delivery in the event of the loss of facilities. These followed on from the plans developed in the event of Pandemic flu; (b) To address the weaknesses identified by Internal Audit in the Council's disaster recovery arrangements; (c) To ensure there was an up to date generic corporate business continuity plan and service level plans, and that these were tested at least annually;
- Corporate Governance – Update the procurement strategy to bring it in line with current practices;
- Equalities and Diversity – To improve the access to buildings for disabled people;
- Managing Finances – (a) To fully review the Financial Regulations; (b) To ensure that the programme of service reviews cover all service areas;
- Transformation – To continue to monitor Southwest One's delivery, to ensure that benefits realisation and the transformation of services was delivered on time and within budget;

- Service Improvement – Ensure that the programme of service reviews covered all service areas;
- Value for Money – (a) The use of benchmarking more systematically to challenge service costs and delivery arrangements; (b) Targeting efficiency savings at those areas which currently provided poor value for money compared to other Councils; and
- Workforce Planning – (a) To prepare an up to date workforce plan; (b) To continue to monitor progress in reducing sickness absence rates.

Resolved that the Corporate Improvement Plan be noted.

34. Internal Audit Plan

Considered report previously circulated, which provided an update on the significant findings and recommendations for the period April to June 2010.

Details were also reported of the operational audits and managed audits completed since **March 2010** which included the main issues raised and the management responses thereto.

Details of the reviews currently in progress were also provided.

Resolved that the report be noted.

35. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the new list of Authorising Officers in respect of the Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

On the 6 April 2010 a range of statutory instruments came into force and the rank of authorising officer was given further clarification in terms of the level of officer who was permitted to grant authorisations under RIPA.

The regulations stipulated that only the Chief Executive, Director, Head of Service or service manager or their equivalent were permitted to grant authorisations under this legislation.

Therefore following the Core Council Review, the levels of posts were reviewed in order to ensure that the Council's policy complied with the regulations and to take into account those officers who had left the Council.

Resolved that the new list of authorising officers in respect of RIPA be noted.

36. Amendments to Standing Order 16 Petitions

The Constitutional Sub-Committee had recently reviewed the Powers and Procedure Rules for Overview and Scrutiny and the recommendations were presented to Members by the Legal and Democratic Services Manager, Mrs Tonya Meers.

Members discussed the recommended amendments and agreed the changes proposed by the Sub-Committee.

Resolved that Council be recommended to agree the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders.

37. Health and Safety across the Organisation

Reported that the information requested by the Committee was currently unavailable due to problems with SAP. There were however no significant incidents to report. The Accident and Incident Report would be circulated to Members between now and the meeting due to be held in September 2010.

(The meeting ended at 8.25 pm).