

2. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE REVIEW: BRIEF AND MEMBER TASK TEAM (A11/RMM)

Purpose of the report

1. This report asks Members to approve the brief for the proposed governance review and appoint a task team to work with staff in progressing this work.

Recommendations

2.
 1. **That the brief for the Member Task Team on the governance review at Appendix 1 be agreed**
 2. **That 4 Members (2 Councillors, 1 Parish Member and 1 Secretary of State Member) are nominated along with the Chairs of the Authority, Planning Committee, Audit and Performance Committee and Services Committee to form a Member Task Team.**
 3. **That this be an approved duty for the purpose of claiming travel and subsistence allowances**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. This work directly contributes to the new corporate objective 11:

'Ensure continuous improvement, value for money, sustainability and high standards of corporate governance'. The work is highlighted as a focus and priority for 2010/11 expressed as follows in the paper agreed by the Authority in December 2009 (minute ref:82/09):

'streamlining use of member and staff resources in achieving effective governance e.g. number and style of meetings, committee structures, member engagement, delegation, communication between members and officers'.

4. This work also contributes to improvement action under the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance which is developed around the principles of good governance as recommended by the CIPFA/SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) framework 'delivering good governance in local government'.

Background

5. The suggestion for this review in 2010/11 came out of the Member workshop on the corporate objectives in October 2009 indicating a desire of Members for making improvements in governance.
6. A draft brief for the task team work was discussed at Strategic Advisory Group on 5 February. The proposals at Appendix 1 take account of comments made at that discussion.
7. Some of the issues that have been raised (by members and staff) for consideration include:
 - Are we using the member resource (and the resource of staff in supporting members) as effectively as possible in achieving good governance?

- Could there be a better balance between time spent on formal committees versus time spent on ambassadorial and external roles?
- How can we support Members better in their external roles and increase their visibility?
- Do we put some Members off from participating with long and detailed discussions in committees?
- Can we use less resources in supporting committee processes?
- Is there the opportunity to make efficiency savings?

Proposals

8. It is proposed that :

- a) A Member Task Team of 8 is appointed to progress this work working with relevant staff (the Management Team lead will be the Director of Corporate Resources). In order to achieve a balanced participation across the different categories of Members it is suggested that 4 Members are nominated (2 Councillors, 1 Parish Member and 1 Secretary of State Member) along with the Chairs of the Authority, Services Committee, Audit and Performance Committee and Planning Committee to form a task team.
- b) the brief for the task team as given in Appendix 1 is discussed and agreed.

9. The task team will project plan its work at its first meeting but the timeline and key milestones will include:

- Identifying what data needs to be collected to inform options for change including seeking ideas from all members through the forthcoming member survey
- A target of reporting to the September Authority meeting on proposals for improvement
- A member workshop proposed for the morning of 23 July
- Consultation with key external stakeholders
- Monthly task team meetings to progress work. The first three meetings have been booked in advance as follows:
afternoon of 15 April, afternoon of 21 May, morning of 22 June

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

10. **Financial:**

The resource for undertaking the review will be funded from existing budgets and work programmes. One of the proposed outcomes of the review is a reduction in the resources allocated to supporting formal governance structures and decision making processes.

11. **Risk Management:**

The task team will identify risks to achieving expected outcomes and how to mitigate these as part of its work.

12. **Sustainability:**

There are no sustainability issues to highlight.

13. **Background papers** (not previously published) – None

Appendices –

Appendix 1: proposed brief for Member Task Team on review of governance

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Ruth Marchington, Director of Corporate Resources, 18 March 2010