

12. REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW WORKING GROUP

1. Purpose of the report

To consider the recommendations arising from discussions at meetings of the Governance Review Working Group.

Key Issues

- **In December 2018 the Authority established a Governance Review Working Group. In May 2019 the Authority considered the first report of the Working Group and agreed the recommendations within it.**
- **Since then the Working Group has met monthly and developed a number of further suggestions on improvements to Member involvement and decision making structures.**
- **The second report of the Working Group is attached to this report.**

2. Recommendations(s)

- 1. To approve the recommendations of the Governance Review Working Group.**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. Our existing Code of Corporate Governance states that Governance is about how we ensure that we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises of the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which we are directed and controlled and through which we account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead communities. Governance is more than making sure that things do not go wrong or fixing them if they do. Good governance adds value by ensuring effectiveness in ever changing circumstances.
4. Both the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Annual Assurance reports from our Internal Auditor stated “the overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating in the Authority is that it provides Substantial Assurance. There are no significant control weaknesses which in the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit need to be considered for inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement”.
5. In July last year the Authority’s External Auditors reviewed the Authority’s Annual Governance Statement, giving the highest assessment of a satisfactory conclusion with no issues and agreed that the Authority’s arrangements were fit for purpose and established in accordance with 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’.
6. However there is an expectation that the Authority will periodically review its Governance arrangements and it was anticipated that this review would contribute to this process. The review has been carried out in the context of our Vision and Mission and will follow the 7 key principles that underpin the Authority’s ways of working.

Background Information

7. At a meeting held on 7 December 2018 the Authority agreed to establish the Governance Review Working Group and set its terms of reference and scope. Mr K Smith, Mr J W Berresford and Councillors J Atkin, P Brady, C Furness, A McCloy and B Woods were appointed as Members of the Group supported by the Chief Executive, the Head of Law and the Democratic Services Manager. In May 2019 the Authority considered the first report of the Working Group which made recommendations on the following issues:
 - The Role of Members
 - The Structure of Authority Agendas:
 - Reports from Chair and Chief Executive
 - Feedback from Outside Bodies and Conferences
 - Member Questions and Motions
 - Performance Monitoring
 - Standing Committee Minutes
 - Committee Structures and Delegation
 - Community Engagement
 - Member Representative Roles
 - Member Scrutiny
8. In July 2019 Cllr J Atkin left the Group and Cllr C Farrell joined. Councillor A McCloy is currently the Chair of the Working Group.
9. Since producing its first report the Working Group has continued to meet monthly to consider a number of outstanding issues including:
 - Officer Delegation Scheme
 - Member Representative Roles
 - Outside Bodies
 - The Appointment Principles
 - Encouraging Member Participation
 - Reporting on attendance
10. This report sets out a number of recommendations on these outstanding issues for implementation from the Annual Meeting on 3 July 2020. The proposals set out in Appendix 1 have been developed as a result of these discussions.

Proposals

11. The report of the Governance Review Working Group is attached at Appendix 1. The report includes a number of recommendations the Authority is asked to approve.

Are there any corporate implications Members should be concerned about?

Financial:

12. The proposals in this report can be delivered within existing budgets. However if any additional Working Groups or Committees are introduced this will have an impact on budgets and staffing resources.

Risk Management:

13. The Working Group has considered risks to achieving expected outcomes and how to mitigate these as part of its work.

Sustainability:
14. There are no sustainability issues to highlight.

Equality:
15. There are no significant equality issues

16. Background papers (not previously published)
Minutes of Meetings of the Working Group

17. Appendices
Appendix 1 - Second Report of the Governance Review Working Group.

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

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