



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

**NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE GROUP
THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2017**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road,
West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors K P Beardsall (Chairman), N A Brown, J Donoghue (Substitute for M Buckle), S J Hull (Substitute for G Davidson), N C Lawrence, A MacInnes, F A Purdue-Horan, Mrs M Stockwood (Substitute for S C Matthews) and J E Thurman (Substitute for Mrs J A Smith)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

A Ali RSM
A Colston KPMG

OFFICERS PRESENT:

L Ashmore Service Manager - Transformation
N Carter Service Manager – Finance and Commercial
A Goodman Constitutional Services Officer
P Linfield Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
Glen O'Connell Monitoring Officer
J Wilkinson Health and Safety Advisor

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors M Buckle, G Davidson, S C Matthews and Mrs J A Smith

1. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

2. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 May 2017 were accepted as a true record.

3. Internal Audit Annual Report 2016/17

Mr Ali presented the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2016/17 that included an overall assessment of the assurances to Members and officers arising from their work last year. He drew Members' attention to the Internal Audit Opinion which gave the conclusion that the Council had an adequate and effective framework for Risk Management, Governance and Internal Control. He explained that this was the highest rating achievable and was not often awarded. During 2016/17, a total of 15 individual audit reviews and two follow up reviews had been undertaken. Of the 15 reviews, 14 were given a substantial assurance rating of Green and one was given a reasonable

assurance of Amber/Green, with no high risk issues to bring to members' attention.

In response to questions, Mr Ali confirmed that areas of cyber risk and data protection would be included in the schedule of audits for 2017/18 and that the scope of the work was in the process of being agreed with Executive Managers.

It was AGREED that the Corporate Governance Group endorse the Internal Audit's final Progress Report 2016/17

4. Health and Safety Annual Report 2016/17

The Health and Safety Advisor gave a presentation which outlined the progress made against the goals set, training, accidents by number and type, injuries and the number of days lost to the Authority and the objectives for 2017/18.

In respect of the Health and Safety Goals for 2016/17, she was pleased to report that the Council had been successful in being awarded the bronze award for the Workplace Health Scheme. The Noise at Work Policy had undergone a full review and had been fully implemented. Advice had been given in respect of the office equipment and safety regulations for the new Arena, and the move was successfully completed. Finally a review had been undertaken of Streetwise's current risk assessments and safe systems of working, and audits had been completed in the high risk areas of Hand Arm Vibration and COSHH.

The Health and Safety Advisor outlined the training undertaken by employees since the last report to the Group and was pleased to report that there had continued to be a high take up amongst staff. With regard to accidents, that the number of incidents was 22 which was considerably less than in 2015/16, continuing the overall downward trend. The Group was informed that the number of days lost due to accidents was 77, a significant decrease over the last year, and only four incidents had been required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive as part of the RIDDOR legislation.

In respect of accidents to members of the public Councillors noted that there had been 10 incidents, which were mainly due to bike and scooter accidents at Rushcliffe Country Park. The number of accidents at the leisure centre facilities for 2016/17 was 363, which was a decrease on the 416 in 2015/16, however it was noted that the scrutiny of this fell under the remit of the Performance Management Board.

In conclusion, the Health and Safety Advisor highlighted the objectives for 2017/18. She explained that in order to ensure continuing development in health and safety policies and practice the following objectives had been determined for the forthcoming year.

- Review the effectiveness of health and safety aspects relating to the Arena
- Develop and evaluate the use of Lone working devices for the Council
- Implementation of a new electronic accident form
- Work towards Silver award for Workplace Health (submission June 2018)
- Review and update the Health and safety policy for the safe use of mobile phones and the Policy for the safe driving at work
- To audit Streetwise in two of its high risk areas to be determined

In response to questions the Health and Safety Advisor confirmed that the figures for days absent from work as a result of an accident did include time that was covered by self certification by the employee. The evacuation training at the arena had been carried on the first days at the new offices when many employees had been requested to work remotely and that additional training had been provided to those who were no present.

In respect of the performance figures contained within the report, Councillors felt that it would be beneficial for future reports to contain percentages in addition to the data for ease of comparing year on year trends.

Action Health and Safety Advisor to include percentages in addition to the data in future reports.

The Group discussed in detail the procedure for evacuating the new offices at the Arena in event of an emergency. Although the procedure had been tested several times during normal office hours it was felt that it would be beneficial to hold a fire drill during an evening Council meeting. Councillors acknowledged that this could impact on the users of the leisure facilities and requested that officers investigate whether this was feasible.

Action Health and Safety Advisor to investigate holding a fire drill during an evening Council meeting

In response to questions regarding the recent tragic events at Grenfell Tower, the Health and Safety Advisor explained that the Council had good controls in place at Hound Lodge and that a fire risk inspection had recently been carried out. Officers from the Strategy Housing department had contacted all the housing suppliers that the Council used and she confirmed that they all had good fire procedures in place. The Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Chief Executive was revisiting all the Council's fire risks and emergency plans, and that the Council was taking a proactive approach.

It was AGREED that the Corporate Governance Group;

- a) had considered the detailed information contained within the Annual Health and Safety Report,
- b) noted the significant progress made against the health and safety goals and objectives previously agreed by the Group for the financial year 2016/17; and

- c) endorsed the proposed health and safety objectives for 2017/18 as set out in the report.

5. **Annual Governance Statement**

The Service Manager - Finance and Commercial presented the Annual Governance Statement that, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, would be published alongside the Statement of Accounts. He informed Councillors that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) had jointly issued a framework and guidance in relation to the Annual Governance Statement titled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016 Edition)'. The guidance urged local authorities to prepare a governance statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they had monitored the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. When complying with the guidance, authorities should use it in a way that best reflected their structure, type, functions and size.

The Service Manager - Finance and Commercial explained that the Local Code of Corporate Governance had been refreshed for this year and now contained seven principles which were referenced in the relevant sections of the Annual Governance Statement. He drew Councillors attention to Section Four of the Statement that outlined the Significant Governance Issues facing the Council and remedial the action taken, and the risks in relation to reviewing the Statement of Accounts.

He informed the Group that it was good practice for the Annual Governance Statement to be considered separately to the published accounts and that there would be a further opportunity to scrutinise the document, prior to it being presented to Council in September for approval.

It was AGREED that the Corporate Governance Group:

- a) Adopted the refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework (2016) and
- b) Approved the 2016/17 Annual Governance Statement.

6. **Review of Constitution – progress update**

The Monitoring Officer gave an update to the Group on the progress of the Constitution Task and Finish Group and the change in membership. He reported that following changes to the membership of the Corporate Governance Group at the Annual Council Meeting, Councillor Edyvean had been replaced by Councillor Mrs Smith.

To date the Group has met on four occasions and had agreed its Terms of Reference at the first meeting, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. The Group had confirmed the general approach to be taken and the areas the review would cover. Subsequently a project plan and work programme had had been developed and it was envisaged that the work would be completed

by February 2018. He outlined the areas the Group had considered, which included the introduction of hyperlinks within council agendas to the relevant section of the Constitution and a document to enable an improved change control procedure to be implemented and evidenced.

The Group had also commissioned a survey of all Councillors to ascertain opinions in relation to public speaking. The results showed that, of the members who responded, 72.9% supported the adoption of public speaking in council meetings. It was noted that the introduction of public speaking for the Planning Committee was being separately considered by Cabinet and Council with a view to implementation in July 2017.

Following a review of the 15 Articles of the Constitution and consideration of alternative options, the Group felt that there was a significant amount of duplication. It was agreed that by creating a new introduction and consolidating the Articles into the relevant parts of the Constitution accessibility and readability could be improved. Finally, the Group had considered the scheme of delegation, taking into account the differing approaches adopted by other councils. On balance it was felt that although the Council's scheme was towards the brief end of this spectrum it contained sufficient details in respect of the key areas of potential legal challenge. Therefore it was proposed that although no fundamental changes were required, improvements could be made by making minor changes to standardised formatting and highlighting functions which were conferred on officers by law.

In response to questions, Councillors were informed that the principles of the review were owned by the Group and as such the review would not be affected by any change in Monitoring Officer. The purpose of the Group's work was not to alter the practices of the Council, except in respect of Public Speaking, but to improve the content and layout of the Constitution.

It was AGREED that the Corporate Governance Group noted the progress of the Constitution Task and Finish Group and the change in membership.

7. Corporate Governance Group Annual Report 2016/17

Councillor MacInnes, Vice Chairman for the municipal Year 2016/17, presented the Annual Report that provided a review of the work undertaken by the Corporate Governance Group over the last year. The Group had considered the following topics during the year;

- Internal Audit
 - Progress Report 2016/17
 - Annual Report 2015/16
 - Strategy 2017/18
- External Audit Plan 2016/17
- Future External Audit Procurement
- Annual Governance Statement 2015/16
- Approval of the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 and External Auditors Report to Those Charged with Governance 2015/16
- Annual Audit Letter 2015/16

- Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring 2016/17
- Risk Management Review and Update
- Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16 and Interim Report
- Certification of Grants and Returns – 2015/16
- Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18
- Treasury Management
 - Outturn 2015/16
 - Monitoring
- Review of the Constitution
- Payment Diversion
- Information Governance

Councillor MacInnes thanked members of the Group and officers for their continuing hard work over the last year.

It was AGREED that the report be approved and referred to Council for consideration.

8. Work Programme

The Group considered the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services that set out details of the proposed work programme for the municipal year 2017/18.

The Group AGREED the Work Programme as set out below:

Date of Meeting	Item
13 September 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Accounts 2016/17 • External Auditors Annual Governance Report 2016/17 • Review of Constitution • Treasury Management Outturn 2016/17 • Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring
5 December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report 2016/17 • Health and Safety Interim Report • Treasury Management 2016/17 – Six Monthly Update • Risk Management Update • Annual Audit Letter • Review of Constitution • Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring
8 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report 2017/18 • Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 • Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring • Certification of Grants and Returns – Annual Report 2016/17

Date of Meeting	Item
10 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Audit Plan 2017/18• Internal Audit Progress Report 2017/18• Internal Audit Strategy 2018/19• Risk Management Update• IT Update• Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Action Sheet
Corporate Governance Group - Thursday 22 June 2017

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
2 Notes of the Previous Meeting	None	
3 Internal Audit Annual Report 2016/17	None	
4 Health and Safety Annual Report 2016/17	a) include percentages in addition to the data in future reports b) investigate holding a fire drill during an evening Council meeting	Health and Safety Advisor Health and Safety Advisor
5 Annual Governance Statement	None	
6 Review of Constitution – progress update	None	
7 Corporate Governance Group Annual Report 2016/17	None	
9 Work Programme	None	