

Governance Matters



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Issue 11

June 2007

Welcome to the June issue of Governance Matters.

As May has been such a busy month we have two extra pages of news for you in this issue. On Thursday 24th May all the Councillors met for the Annual Meeting. Turn to page 2 and 3 for details of what was decided.

Our regular in-depth feature 'Spotlight on..' focuses on the new Members' Code of Conduct. The new model Code came into force on 3rd May 2007 and was adopted by Leeds City Council at the Annual Meeting. A summary of the main provisions of the Code can be found on page 4.

We also take a look at what the governance committees have been doing over the past two months, and at their busy schedule for their first meetings of the new municipal year.

We hope you find the information helpful and interesting. You can play your part by emailing suggestions for articles to cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk

Front Page News...

Standards Committee Annual Report

The Standards Committee Annual Report has now been completed and is available on the [Leeds City Council website](#). The report provides an interesting insight into the work of the Committee, and their plans for the new municipal year.

New Members' Code of Conduct

The Council adopted the new Members' Code of Conduct at their Annual Meeting on 24th May. There are several additional provisions in the new Code. To assist Members with understanding these changes, Member Development will be offering training for Members throughout June. See the 'Spotlight on...' page for more information about the new Code and the dates of the training sessions.

We are also preparing an e-learning module on the new Code of Conduct, which will replace the existing version of 'Cracking the Code'. Look out for further news on this in future issues of Governance Matters.

Constitution Amendments

A number of changes to the Constitution were agreed at the Annual Meeting of Council. An updated version of the Constitution will be published on the Council's website by the end of June. It will also be circulated in hard copy to relevant officers.

STOP PRESS...

The Annual Meeting 24th May 2007

The Annual Meeting is the first meeting of the municipal year. At the meeting Council agrees the appointment of the Lord Mayor and Leaders of the Council for the municipal year as well as the terms of reference and membership of the Council committees. They are also informed of decisions taken by the Leader regarding the Executive arrangements for the year.

THE LORD MAYOR

The Lord Mayor is a Councillor who is chosen to be the 'First Citizen' of Leeds for a year, during which time he/she adopts a strictly non party political approach and represents the City in carrying out a wide range of engagements. The Lord Mayor also Chair's meetings of Council.

The Lord Mayor's proper mode of address is "The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of the City of Leeds" but it is correct and quite usual to use the short title "The Lord Mayor of Leeds".

This years Lord Mayor is [**Councillor Brian Cleasby**](#)

This years Deputy Lord Mayor is [**Councillor Rev Alan Taylor**](#)

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leadership of the Council has remained the same as last year.

[**Councillor Mark Harris**](#) will be Leader of Council from 25th May 2007 to 30th November 2007, and Deputy Leader from 1st December 2007 until the Annual Meeting 2008.

[**Councillor Andrew Carter**](#) will be Deputy Leader of the Council from 25th May to 30th November 2007, and Leader from 1st December 2007 until the Annual Meeting 2008.

SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

At the Annual Meeting the Council Committees' terms of reference are approved. Key changes were made to the Council's scrutiny boards. Scrutiny boards will now be aligned to Director portfolios, with a separate board for the culture and leisure functions.

The new scrutiny boards are:

- Resources;
- City Development;
- Culture and Leisure;
- Environment and Neighbourhoods;
- Children's Services; and
- Health and Adult Social Care.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for Central and Corporate Functions.

Further details of the Council's scrutiny arrangements are available from the [Scrutiny Support Team](#).

STOP PRESS...

Executive Arrangements

The Executive Board is the principal decision making body of the Council. The Members of the Board and their portfolio or status are decided by the Leader of the Council and are announced at the Annual Meeting.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Central and Corporate

Executive Member – Cllr M Harris

Development and Regeneration

Executive Member – Cllr A Carter

Environmental Services

Executive Member – Cllr S Smith

Neighbourhoods and Housing

Executive Member – Cllr J L Carter

Children's Services

Lead Executive Member – Cllr R Brett

Learning

Executive Member – Cllr R Harker

Leisure

Executive Member – Cllr J Procter

Adult Health and Social Care

Executive Member – Cllr P Harrand

Leader of the Labour Group

Executive Member – Cllr K Wakefield

Leader of the Morley Independent Group

Executive Member – Cllr R Finnigan

The Leader has also identified Cllr J Blake as a non-voting advisory member who will be able to attend and speak at meetings to assist the Labour nominated Executive Member.

The Executive Members are assisted with specific aspects of their portfolio by **Lead Members**, who carry out policy and development work.

Governance Committees Membership

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (CGA)

At the Annual Meeting the Council decided to amend the membership arrangements of the CGA Committee. In accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Executive Members are no longer able to be members of CGA Committee. In addition, the Leaders and Whips of the three largest parties are not permitted to be members of the Committee.

You can find details of the new membership of CGA Committee on the Committee page.

Standards Committee

Following their previous decision to increase the Standards Committee membership, the Council appointed two additional Members to the Committee at the Annual Meeting.

The two reserve members of the Committee have also been appointed as full members of the Committee, able to vote and participate in discussions. The updated membership of the Committee can be found on the Standards Committee page.

Spotlight on...

The New Members' Code of Conduct

On 3rd May 2007 a **new model Code of Conduct for Members** came into force. The Council decided at the Annual Meeting to adopt this new Code with immediate effect.

Some of this may seem familiar, however lots of the new Code will be new to you. There are additional provisions, for example rules against bullying and intimidation, as well as changes to the rules surrounding declaration of interests. We will be providing **training on the new Code** for Members. The dates of the training sessions can be found in the box opposite. The Standards Committee support the Monitoring Officer in urging Members to attend one of these sessions.

Summary of the new Code of Conduct

Members must:

- Follow the Code of Conduct whenever they are representing their authority, or claiming to do so;
- Follow the rules regarding personal and **prejudicial interests**;
- Keep their register of interests up to date;
- Treat others with respect; and
- Register appropriate gifts and hospitality received in their register of interests.

Members must not:

- Bring their authority or office into disrepute;
- Use the authority's resources for party political purposes;
- Compromise the impartiality of people who work for the authority;

- Discriminate against people on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age;
- Bully, intimidate or attempt to intimidate others;
- Use their position improperly for personal gain or to benefit their friends or close associates;
- Attend meetings or be involved in decision-making where they have a prejudicial interest – except when speaking when the general public are also allowed to do so;
- Disclose confidential information, other than in exceptional circumstances (refer to the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution); and
- Prevent anyone getting information they are entitled to.

TRAINING ON THE NEW CODE

12th June – 10am until 12pm
19th June – 12pm until 2pm
19th June – 5pm until 7pm
20th June – 10am until 12pm
26th June – 12pm until 2pm
27th June – 12pm until 2pm

Councillors who wish to attend any of these sessions should contact Alison Redwood in Member Development on 0113 39 50279.

CAUTION...

The rules surrounding **prejudicial interests** have changed. We will cover interests in detail in the next issue of Governance Matters. Councillors will also receive training on interests at the sessions listed above. To find out more right away you can access guidance from the [Standards Board](#) on their website. If there is a specific question in the mean time, please contact the Corporate Governance Team on 0113 39 50261.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

25th April 2007

Among the issues considered at the April meeting was the annual report on compliance with laws and regulations.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS

One of the roles of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is to *review the adequacy of policies and practices to ensure compliance with statutory and other guidance*. One of the ways the committee does this is by receiving this report from the Chief Legal Services Officer which sets out how he ensures that the Council complies with any new laws and regulations introduced by Government. To find out more about this work you can read the [report](#) on the Council's website.

16th May 2007

At an additional meeting the Committee considered a number of reports regarding making changes to the Council's governance structure. As a result they made a number of recommendations to Council to amend the Constitution.

In summary these are:

- changes to Scrutiny Boards (see page 2);
- an amendment to Article 8 of the Constitution limiting the membership of Plans Panels and making training compulsory;
- an amendment to Article 9 changing the membership of the Committee (see page 3); and
- changes to the procedure rules for the Full Council meeting.

29th June 2007

Items to be considered on 29th June include:

- Annual reports on risk management, internal audit, project assurance, member training and the Standards Committee.
- An update report on the Delivering Successful Change Project.
- The work programme for the External Auditors for the forthcoming municipal year.
- Agreement of the **Corporate Governance Statement**.
- The Statement of Accounts for 2005/6.

JARGON BUSTER

Corporate Governance Statement

The purpose of the Corporate Governance Statement is to provide a public statement of how the Council is performing in relation to the areas of work that make up the Council's internal control environment: e.g. risk management / standards / training / performance management. Receiving annual reports on these issues supports the Committee to approve the Statement.

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Councillor John Bale (Chair)
Councillor Geoff Driver
Councillor Elizabeth Minkin
Councillor David Blackburn
Councillor Colin Campbell
Councillor Robert Gettings
Mike Wilkinson – Chair of the Standards Committee (non-voting)

Standards Committee

11th April 2007 and 1st May 2007

The Committee approved the final draft of the Standards Committee Annual Report 2006/2007 at their meeting in April, and held an additional meeting in May to consider the new Members' Code of Conduct.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2006/2007

The Standards Committee approved the final draft of their annual report at this meeting. The report will now be published on the Leeds City Council internet page and be considered by Full Council.

NEW MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The Standards Committee met on the 1st May 2007 to recommend to the Council that they adopt the new model Code of Conduct at their Annual Meeting on 24th May 2007.

The Standards Committee also resolved to recommend to the Parish and Town Councils in the Leeds area that they adopt the Code of Conduct as soon as possible with the addition of one non-mandatory provision.

Finally, the Committee also considered the training schedule for Leeds City Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors on the new model Code.

12th July 2007

Items to be considered in July include:

- The action plan to address the issues identified in the ethical audit.
- A report regarding the Members' Induction Period and whether relevant deadlines were complied with.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Independent Members

Mike Wilkinson (Chair)
Cheryl Grant
Rosemary Greaves

Parish Representatives

Councillor Mrs P Walker
Councillor J Priestley

Leeds City Councillors

Councillor J L Carter
Councillor J Elliott
Councillor G Kirkland
Councillor E Nash
Councillor L Russell

THE NEXT ISSUE OF GOVERNANCE MATTERS

We hope you have found this issue of Governance Matters useful. In the next issue we will focus on the new rules surrounding prejudicial interests.

If you have any ideas for our 'Spotlight On...' feature or any questions you would like answering, please contact the Corporate Governance Team on 0113 39 51632 / 0113 39 50261 or email us at cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk