

# Governance Matters



Corporate Governance Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor West, Civic Hall, Leeds  
LS1 1UR Tel: 0113 3950261  
Email: [cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk)

Issue 22

September 2009

Welcome to the August issue of Governance Matters.

Our regular in-depth feature 'Spotlight on..' focuses on the Annual Governance Statement, and looks at how this informs the work programmes of the governance committees and the Corporate Governance Board.

We also take a look at what the governance committees have been doing since June.

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](mailto:cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk)

## *Front Page News...*

### **Leeds City Council Partnerships Toolkit**

The toolkit for partnership governance has now been published, and is available on the Partnership Governance page on the intranet. The toolkit provides guidance on the requirements set out in the Governance Framework for Significant Partnerships, which we told you about in the March issue of Governance Matters. As well as giving guidance on the requirements, the toolkit also contains guidance on the definition of a significant partnership, gives details of the register of significant partnerships, and explains how compliance with the Framework will be monitored. We hope that all Members and Officers involved in partnership working will find the toolkit helpful in thinking about how to ensure the Council's partnerships achieve excellent governance standards.

### **Regional Standards Conference**

The first annual West Yorkshire Regional Standards Conference was held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July at City Hall in Bradford. This event was organised by the Monitoring Officers of the five West Yorkshire Local Authorities, and was attended by Standards Committee members and officers involved with Standards from each of these Councils.

Attendees took part in several sessions, including a declarations of interest quiz, and a local assessment workshop. Keynote presentations were provided by Paul Hoey, Head of Policy and Guidance at Standards for England, and Councillor Mehboob Khan, Board member of Standards for England and Leader of Kirklees Council.

## Spotlight on...

### Annual Governance Statement

The Council is required by law to produce this Statement at the end of each municipal year. The Statement must demonstrate how the Council is achieving good governance, and identify any areas for improvement. In turn the Statement must be published within the Council's Accounts.

The Corporate Governance Board co-ordinates the compilation of the draft Statement. Internal Audit review and provide an opinion on the content prior to presentation to a Committee of Councillors. At its meeting in June the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee approved the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2009.

In Leeds the Statement is structured around the 6 principles in the Code of Corporate Governance. Under each of these principles lead officers provide an opinion as to the operation of a range of governance controls.

The outcomes of external Audits and Inspections (carried out throughout the year) are also summarised. Work undertaken by the Council's external auditors and by inspection bodies provide a key source of assurance regarding the delivery of services. This year this included the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services and the Commission for Social Care Inspection of Adult Social Care, as well as the Council's performance in the

**Governance Matters**  
Issue 22 – August 2009

Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The Governance Statement concludes with an assessment of those areas of governance that require improvement in the forthcoming year. An action plan has been drawn up which sets out how the Council will address these issues. This action plan will be monitored monthly by the Corporate Governance Board, and on a regular basis by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

The Annual Governance Statement is available to view or download from the [Corporate Governance Documents](#) page of the intranet and internet.

#### CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

A reminder of the 6 principles in the Code of Corporate Governance:

1. Focussing on the Council's purpose and community needs;
2. Having clear responsibilities and arrangements for accountability;
3. Good conduct and behaviour;
4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk management;
5. Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective;
6. Forming, engaging and maintaining effective relationships with local people and stakeholders.

## Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

**30<sup>th</sup> June and 29<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

In June, the Committee approved the Statement of Accounts 2008/09 and in July the Committee received the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2008/09.

### **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2008/09**

Under its Terms of Reference, the Committee is responsible for approving the Council's Accounts, and the Accounts for 2008/09 were approved on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The Auditor's opinion on the Accounts will be received by the Committee at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

### **ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2008/09**

The Committee received a report highlighting the issues raised by Internal Audit in its annual report for 2008/09, and approved the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2009/10.

Members were particularly interested in the review undertaken on the Strategic Landlord Management and Assurance Framework, and asked that an update be provided on this work as part of the next Internal Audit update.

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

Items to be considered in September include:

- Members' Allowances and Expenses.

## General Purposes Committee

**13<sup>th</sup> July and 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

The Committee considered proposed amendments to the Member Management Committee Terms of Reference and proposals for the new Executive Arrangements.

### **MEMBER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered amendments to the Member Management Committee Terms of Reference, which would allow the Committee to determine requests to establish informal working groups of Members, and to represent the views of elected Members to the Executive in relation to the provision of information, communication and associated technologies.

Members resolved to recommend the amendments to full Council, and they were approved on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

### **EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS: PROPOSALS**

The Committee considered a report asking it to make recommendations to full Council about drawing up proposals for its executive arrangements, following the consultation exercise.

The Committee resolved to recommend that full Council draw up proposals to change to the new style Leader and Cabinet form. For more information on executive arrangements, please see [Issue 19](#) of Governance Matters.

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2009**

Items to be considered in October include:

- Final Proposals for the Polling District Review.

## Standards Committee

8<sup>th</sup> July and 19<sup>th</sup> August  
2009

### **STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROCEDURE: POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POSTS (PRPs)**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 transferred responsibilities in relation to considering applications for exemption from (or requests that a post be added to) the list of PRPs from an independent adjudicator to Standards Committees.

Officers in politically restricted posts may not, for example, canvass on behalf of a political party or be an Elected Member of a Local Authority.

Some posts are automatically subject to restriction, if they are at a senior level or are above spinal column point 44 on the pay scale. Posts are also subject to restriction if they involve providing advice to the authority or a Committee, or speaking on behalf of the authority to journalists or broadcasters, on a regular basis.

The Standards Committee considered a proposed procedure for considering applications for an exemption from the list of PRPs, and requests for a post to be added to the list of PRPs.

Members agreed to adopt the procedure, however it was agreed that a report should be submitted to the next Standards Committee meeting to address the several queries raised by Members in relation to this process.

### **15<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

Items to be considered in October include:

- Code of Practice for the Determination of Planning Matters.

**Governance Matters**  
Issue 22 – August 2009

## Corporate Governance Board

6<sup>th</sup> July and 12<sup>th</sup> August  
2009

The Board received reports concerning:

- Value for Money arrangements;
- The Council's induction processes;
- One Council Commissioning strategy; and
- Skills and Competency Frameworks.

The Board also held a special workshop session on 17<sup>th</sup> July about ALMO governance arrangements.

Items to be considered at future meetings include:

- A report back on the review of governance arrangements for PPP/PFI projects;
- Data security; and
- Partnership governance.

### **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 results of the consultation on the Members' Code of Conduct and the potential changes arising from this.

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 50261 or email us at

[cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:cxd.corporategovernance@leeds.gov.uk)