

Welcome to the March issue of Governance Matters.

In this issue we take a look at what the governance committees have been doing since January.

Our regular in-depth feature 'Spotlight on..' will be back in the next issue with a special report on the Annual Meeting, which will be held on 27th May.

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 are a winner for Leeds!

We are very pleased to announce that Leeds City Council has been named as one of the most ethical authorities in the country, winning in the Standards and Ethics category at the LGC Awards 2010 on Wednesday 24th March. Standards for England, which supports the award, was impressed by Leeds' approach to ethical governance within the authority. More information about the LGC Awards can be found at www.lgcawards.co.uk.



New Standards Committee Chair

The current Chair of the Standards Committee, Mike Wilkinson, will stand down at the Annual Meeting after serving two terms. On 24th February 2010 full Council appointed Gordon Tollefson (who is currently a Reserve Independent Member of the Committee) as Chair for the 2010/11 municipal year.

Annual Review of the Constitution

Each year the Constitution is reviewed to ensure that it is up to date. The Constitution is then re-issued after the Council's Annual Meeting in May. As part of the review, the Corporate Governance Team contacts relevant officers to find out whether any amendments are required. If you are aware of any amendments that may be needed, please contact the [Corporate Governance Team](#).

Member Code of Conduct

A new Member Code of Conduct has been anticipated over the last 12 months, however Communities and Local Government have announced that the Government is concentrating on financial instruments and therefore that a new Code will not be laid until after a general election.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

10th February and 17th March 2010

The Committee has considered reports on Monitoring of Key and Major Decisions, International Financial Reporting Standards and Leeds City Region Governance Arrangements.

MONITORING OF KEY AND MAJOR DECISIONS

The Committee considered a report updating Members on the monitoring and administration of Key and Major decisions.

Members noted the improving picture and that an ever increasing number of decisions are being recorded as Directorates become more aware of the process required.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS

The Committee received assurances that there is an appropriate structure in place to successfully implement the Standards.

LEEDS CITY REGION GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee received a report on the governance revisions being undertaken by the Leeds City Region.

Members particularly discussed the minimum governance arrangements that should exist. The Committee resolved to receive further updates.

14th April 2010

Items to be considered in April include:

- Fraudulent tenancies.

Governance Matters
Issue 25 – March 2010

General Purposes Committee

8th February 2010

In February the Committee considered the below changes to the Constitution:

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS TO WARD BASED COMMUNITY FORUMS

It was identified that there were no provisions for representation on ward forums to be based upon the political balance of the ward. The Committee was asked to make recommendations to full Council to amend the constitution to help ensure that chairs of ward forums more accurately reflect the political balance of the wards to which they relate.

The Committee resolved to recommend to that the Constitution be changed. Full Council agreed the proposals on 24th February 2010.

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES PROCEDURE RULES

The Committee was asked to make recommendations to full Council to amend the Appointments to Outside Bodies Procedure Rules, so that it would be a requirement that all group whips or their nominees agree an appointment prior to the use of delegated authority by an officer.

The Committee resolved to recommend that the changes be made. Full Council agreed the proposals on 24th February 2010.

18th May 2010

Items to be considered in May include:

- The annual review of the Constitution.

Standards Committee

17th February 2010

In December, the Committee considered reports on the Ethical Audit Action Plan – Human Resources Update, and Compulsory Training for Members of Standards Committee.

ETHICAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN – HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

The Committee considered an update report on the actions taken by Human Resources as a result of the ethical audit, and in particular the results of the ethical governance questions that had been included in the Staff Survey.

The Committee was concerned that the results did not appear to have shown an improvement since the last ethical audit which was undertaken in 2007, and requested that further information be provided in relation to the actions that will be taken to address the outcome.

COMPULSORY TRAINING

The Committee considered proposals to require Standards Committee members to have attended the relevant training prior to sitting on its Sub-Committees, which deal with complaints against elected Members.

The Committee endorsed this proposal, therefore General Purposes Committee will be asked to recommend that full Council approves the necessary amendments to Article 9 of the Constitution.

22nd April 2010

Items to be considered in April include:

- Standards Committee Annual Report 2009/10; and
- Standards Committee Procedure Rules.

Governance Matters
Issue 25 – March 2010

Corporate Governance Board

4th February and 3rd March 2010

The Board received reports concerning:

- The Annual Performance Assessment of Adult Social Care;
- The Use of Covert Surveillance;
- Corporate Governance Board Terms of Reference; and
- Use Of Resources 2010.

Items to be considered at future meetings include:

- The Annual Information Security Report;
- A report back on Money Laundering Monitoring; and
- A report back on the review of the whistle blowing process.

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 decisions made at the Annual Meeting.

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