

Welcome to the January issue of Governance Matters.

Our regular in-depth feature 'Spotlight on..' focuses on Partnership Governance.

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

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...

New Executive Arrangements

Following consultation with the public and with key partners, in November full Council formally resolved to adopt the "new style" Leader and Cabinet form of executive arrangements. The arrangements, which are similar to those the Council currently has in place, will come into force 3 days after the next Council elections.

Local Government Chronicle Awards 2010 – Standards and Ethics Category

In 2009, the Council was shortlisted in the 'Standards and Ethics' category of the LGC Awards. An entry was also submitted for the 2010 Awards and we are happy to announce that we have made the shortlist again! Following the next stage of judging, the winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in London on 24th March.



Code of Corporate Governance

The Council's Code of Corporate Governance has recently been updated to make sure that it is current and fit for purpose. The Code is the Council's public commitment to upholding good governance standards, and sets out how the Council will achieve this. The amendments made include an increased focus on what impact having good governance arrangements in place will have on the public. The revised Code can be viewed on the Council's [website](#).

Spotlight on...

Partnership Governance Update

The Governance Framework for Significant Partnerships sets out:

- the steps which the Council will take **before entering into a partnership**;
- the **minimum governance requirements** each partnership must have;
- how the Council will **support** the governance of each partnership; and
- how the Council monitors and **reviews** its involvement with each partnership.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) is required to review the Framework each year, and report the review to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. The review for 2009 was presented to the Committee on 13th January 2010. Following this review, several amendments have been made to the Framework, as follows:

- The format has been changed so that the requirements are now grouped thematically, rather than under the six principles of the Code of Corporate Governance;
- The requirement for a partnership to agree shared values has been removed, further to feedback received from lead officers;
- The annual review of the partnership is now required to be focussed on value for

money, and lead officers are required to report on their Partnerships' annual review to the relevant Director.

The toolkit for partnership governance has also been updated to reflect the amendments to the Framework. The toolkit provides guidance on the requirements of the Framework and 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.

The revised version of the Framework and toolkit are available on the [Partnership Governance](#) page of the intranet.

REGISTER OF SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS

A review of the Council's Register of Significant Partnerships is currently underway.

Under the Framework, the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) must annually review the Register to ensure that it is up-to-date. Forms have been sent to all Directors asking them to confirm whether any amendments need to be made to their current entries, and whether any significant partnerships need to be added to or removed from the register.

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

12th November 2009, 15th December 2009 & 13th January 2010

The Committee has considered reports on Bid Rigging, The Changing Financial Landscape and the Half Yearly Internal Audit Report.

BID RIGGING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The Committee received a report on the recent scandal of bid rigging in construction and considered the implications for the Council.

The Committee requested a legal update on ethical conduct for all Members and that the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) consider the exclusion of contractors named in the Office of Fair Trading investigation from any further opportunities to tender with the Council.

THE CHANGING FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

A report was presented to the Committee highlighting the financial pressures facing the public sector and how in the light of this the Council was managing its finances in the medium term. It was resolved to circulate the report to all Members.

OUTCOME OF THE COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

The Committee considered a report informing Members of the results of the Organisational and Area Assessment for Leeds and how the assessment is undertaken.

HALF YEARLY INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee received a report updating members of all the work undertaken by Internal Audit over the first half of 2009/10.

It was resolved that further reports from internal audits should be received by the Committee where Internal Audit have identified that the control environment of an area under review is found to have limited or no assurance.

Also resolved following a discussion on the escalation of Internal Audit Reports was to receive a further report detailing a revised Internal Audit protocol to enable escalation arrangements to be formalised.

10th February 2010

Items to be considered in February include:

- Anti Social behaviour and the Council's response to it;
- Decision making and data quality; and
- Annual Performance Assessment of Adult Social Care.

General Purposes Committee

General Purposes Committee has not met since the last issue of Governance Matters. The next meeting will be on **8th February 2010** when the items to be considered include:

- Amendments to Outside Bodies Procedure Rules; and
- Employment Committee Terms of Reference.

Standards Committee

16th December 2009

In December, the Committee considered reports on the Standards Committee Media Protocol and the Standards Committee Communications Plan.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEDIA PROTOCOL

Members considered a report reviewing the Standards Committee Media Protocol, including the steps to be taken to publicise the Member complaints process.

The Committee agreed that it is no longer necessary to produce an annual notice in relation to the complaints process, as long as information is published in About Leeds from time to time, and the notices displayed in Citizens Advice Bureaux, Libraries and Council buildings is refreshed on a regular basis.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Committee considered a report reviewing the Standards Committee Communications Plan, and seeking approval of the proposed amendments.

The Committee was informed that information in relation to the ethical framework will be published in About Leeds as soon as the new Member Code of Conduct is released. A series of minor amendments were also proposed, which were approved by the Committee.

17th February 2010

Items to be considered in February include:

- Standards Committee Training Plan; and
- Annual Report on Monitoring Officer Protocol.

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Corporate Governance Board

8th December 2009

The Board received reports concerning:

- The Use of Covert surveillance;
- Delegated Decision Making;
- The annual Governance Statement 2010; and
- Governance Framework for Significant Partnerships.

Items to be considered at future meetings include:

- Annual Performance Assessment of Adult Social Care;
- The Council's relationship with External Auditors;
- Clear desk policy and clear screen policy;
- Money Laundering Monitoring; and
- The Council's information security arrangements.

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