



INFORMATION SHEET

Audit Committee

Issue No: 04/2017

Date Issued: 7 November 2017

Update on Local Code of Governance Action Plan

Officer contact: Michael Howard – Business Assurance Manager 01494 421357

Introduction

The Audit Committee were informed of the Councils' corporate governance arrangements at their meeting on 15th June with a key feature of those arrangements being the introduction of a Local Code of Governance (the Code).

Included with the Code was a series of Areas of Improvement, owned by a nominated senior Action Owner who has operational responsibility for that area of work. The Areas for Improvement were agreed by the Action Owner and the Strategic Management Board as the implementation of the improvements were designed so as to complement and enhance the Councils existing governance arrangements.

It was agreed that an update as regards the progress in implementing the individual actions would be provided to the Strategic Management Board who are responsible for ensuring that the Councils conducts its business activities in accordance with sound governance principles.

Appendix 1 provides details as regards the level of implementation, as at September 2017, of the agreed areas for improvement.

A Contact Name is shown above and Members are asked to contact that person if they have any queries etc.

The Press is reminded that the Council's procedure is for ALL Press enquiries to be routed via the Communications Office on High Wycombe 421230/421625.

LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN – September 2017

No	Area for Improvement	Owner	Update – September 2017
1	Consider introducing an Annual report outlining the work of the Standards Committee, detailing: training provided number of referrals and outcomes, any outside assurance as regards operational processes.	District Solicitor	<p>Agreement reached with the Standards Chairman that a report will be submitted to Standard Committee – 10th October 2017, proposing that an annual report is presented each Spring to full Council summarising the previous year's work and outcomes.</p> <p>Key date – Standards Committee 10th October 2017.</p>
2	Reminder to be issued to All Members of the need to ensure that all disclosures are made.	District Solicitor	<p>A reminder to all Members providing guidance on declaration of interests and Gifts and Hospitality disclosures was included in the Members' Update - 7th September 2017.</p> <p>A report is also to be presented to Standards Committee on 10th October recommending that full Council approve guidance on the circumstances when members should and should not accept offers of gifts and hospitality, to be appended to the Member Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Key date: Standards Committee 10th October 2017.</p>
3	Consideration is given to compiling an annual report that details, where as a Council, it has learnt from the outcome(s) of a complaint.	Head of Democratic Legal and Policy	<p>Due to the resignation of the post holder and the need to ensure service resilience this work stream is currently on hold pending recruitment.</p> <p>A 2017/18 Annual report picking up learning points will be produced at the year end and shared with Strategic Management Board ahead of publication.</p>
4	Review to be undertaken as regards the: currency of the Whistle Blowing policy, approval process: Member and Officer awareness.	Head of HR, ICT & Shared Support Services	<p>Revisions made to existing WB Policy by Human Resources and Internal Audit.</p> <p>Following agreement by SMB, Policy is to be presented to the Personnel and Development Committee 4th October 2017.</p> <p>Once agreed by the P& D Committee, officers will be informed of the new Policy.</p> <p>Key dates: P&D Committee approval 4th October 2017 Deployment of WB policy to officers (TBC)</p>

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5	Further work to be undertaken in 2017/18 in the Democratic, Legal & Policy Team consisting of a review covering both the Constitution and the wider decision making & governance arrangements.	Head of Democratic Legal and Policy	<p>A report has been taken to Regulatory and Appeals Committee in July 2017 setting the review of the Constitution in motion. A further report is due to go to the next meeting in October /November.</p> <p>Key date: Regulatory and Appeals Committee 30th October 2017.</p>
6	Review to be undertaken of current corporate Plan objectives to refresh and update.	Head of Democratic Legal and Policy	<p>A timetable has been set out and agreed with Leaders Strategic Briefing (LSB) for revising the current Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Work has started on the revisions with Strategic Management Board (SMB) with a report being presented to Cabinet in November 2017.</p> <p>Key date: Cabinet meeting in November 2017.</p>
7	Review to be undertaken to assess the purpose and applicability of the quarterly financial and performance process.	Head of Finance and Commercial (S151)	<p>Head of Finance & Commercial and the Chief Accountant have reviewed the information provided to Cabinet Quarterly. The format and content of the report has been revised and is more succinct and focused on key information and highlights areas of variance/concern and guides the Cabinet to those areas they may need to take action on.</p> <p>In 2018-19, it may be appropriate to consider reporting to Cabinet based on distorted quarters, ie 2months, 3 months, 3 months, 4 months so allowing for mid two reports to be more timely and enable informed decision making.</p>
8	Review to be undertaken to refresh and update the current Communications strategy.	Head of Democratic Legal and Policy	<p>This is linked to the refresh of the Corporate Plan, timetabled for November 2017 and then work will start on the Communications strategy.</p> <p>Key date - revised Communications strategy to be in place from April 2018.</p> <p>In addition a review of the governance arrangements regarding the use of social media by Members is to be submitted to the Standards Committee in October 2018</p> <p>In parallel, guidelines as to the use of social media by Officers is being considered by SMB and Joint Staff Committee.</p> <p>Key dates - two governance reviews to be completed by the end</p>

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			of October and November 2017
9	Review to be undertaken to refresh and update the current Engagement strategy and toolkit	Head of Democratic Legal and Policy	<p>Review to be undertaken to determine our approach i.e. making sure that Services frame engagement in the right context.</p> <p>Key date: review to be undertaken with a view to having updated guidance and a protocol in place from April 2018.</p>

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