
Audit and Governance Committee

31 March 2009

Report of the Assistant Director of Resources (Customer Service & Governance)

Corporate Governance Review 2009

Summary

1. This report provides the background and early draft outcomes of the recently completed Corporate Governance review, consisting of a self assessment against the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' framework (2007) and outcomes from annual assurance questionnaires completed by each directorate. The requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework were presented in a report to this committee on 24 September 2007 (see annex A).

Background

2. During February and March 2009 a series of workshops have been held with a range of senior officers across the Council to 'baseline' the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the standards set by CIPFA/SOLACE in the Good Governance framework.
3. The definition of Governance used in the framework is defined by the following six core principles which should underpin the governance arrangements of all public bodies:
 - a clear definition of the body's purpose and desired outcomes
 - well-defined functions and responsibilities
 - an appropriate corporate culture
 - transparent decision making
 - a strong governance team
 - real accountability to stakeholders.
4. The Corporate Governance review will inform the following:
 - the drafting of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2008/09 (to be reported to Audit & Governance Committee on 29th June 2009);
 - the Single Improvement Plan (SIP) Refresh currently underway (to be reported to CMT/Executive in April/May 2009);
 - the redrafting of the CYC Business Model (which will interpret the Council's framework illustrated in the annex in operational terms for all staff and managers);
 - the evidence base for the Use of Resources Assessment 2009.

5. The early outcomes of the work indicate the following areas are likely to be highlighted for attention in the AGS and the Single Improvement Plan Refresh:
 - HR (ongoing from 2008 SIP)
 - Equalities (ongoing from 2008 SIP)
 - Scrutiny (ongoing from 2008 SIP)
 - Partnership governance (including Risk Management)
 - Business Continuity
 - Project management
 - Customer strategy
 - Ethical agenda & decision-making.
6. Once finalised, the more detailed outcomes of the governance review will be reported to Audit & Governance Committee in June alongside the AGS, including a summary of how action plans will be monitored at each A&G committee meeting.
7. The AGS is currently still being drafted and needs to take account of the governance review to validate its content. Other work is still yet to be completed such as the review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit and the Internal Audit Outturn work to inform the Head of Internal Audit's opinion, which will all take place after the end of the financial year. A useful diagram to depict how the AGS is constructed is shown in annex B to the report.

Consultation

8. A range of senior corporate officers have been involved in the review of corporate governance. Directorates have also submitted annual assurance statements which cover service input to the review.

Options

9. Not relevant for the purpose of the report.

Analysis

10. Not relevant for the purpose of the report.

Corporate Priorities

11. This report contributes to the overall effectiveness of the council's governance and assurance arrangements.

Implications

12. There are no financial, HR, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, IT or property implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

13. By not responding effectively to the matters contained in this report, the council will fail to properly comply with legislative and best practice requirements, and its performance in future CAA assessments (particularly organisational assessments) could be adversely affected.

Recommendations

14. Members are asked to:

a) note the early findings of the Corporate Governance Review;

Reason

To understand the council's internal control environment and potential areas for attention .

b) acknowledge that the developing AGS and the Corporate Governance detailed findings and action plans will be brought to the June and future meetings.

Reason

To ensure relevant assurances are provided for members to support the Annual Governance Statement, including the effective management and follow-up of key action to be taken to support on-going development and improvement work at the council.

Contact Details

Author:

Pauline Stuchfield
Assistant Director (Customer Service
& Governance)
Telephone: 01904 551706

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Ian Floyd
Director of Resources
Telephone: 01904 551100

Report Approved



Date 19 March 2009

Specialist Implications Officers

Not applicable

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

See below

Annex

Annex 1	Report to A&G 24 th September 2007 – The Local Code of Corporate Governance
Annex 2	CYC's Annual Governance Statement Framework