

35. COUNCIL'S CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE - ANNUAL REVIEW

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Chief Legal Officer advising of the outcome of the annual review of the council's compliance with its Code of Corporate Governance.

The Chief Legal Officer recalled that a new Framework had been produced by CIPFA/SOLACE which had changed the emphasis of corporate governance from one focused on the rigour of processes to one focused on achieving outcomes. In June 2010 the council had adopted a revised Code based on the new Framework. Under the Code, the Chief Legal Officer was designated to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the Code and to co-ordinate and carry out the annual review of compliance with the Code, which required a report to the council annually within three months of the end of the financial year.

The Chief Legal Officer explained that the new Code required assessment in considerably more detail and whereas the old Code comprised of 148 individual items, the new Code had 370 items assessed across three aspects – approach, deployment and review. Each item of the Code had been assessed in turn in respect of the approach aspect using a scoring structure.

The individual scores and supporting evidence for each item were contained in a separate full assessment report which was available for inspection from Committee Services.

The Corporate Governance Working Group had addressed a number of specific issues during 2010/11, and these were examined within the report. One of the issues related to the committee report template used by services for submitting reports to committee.

The report provided the following appendices:-

Appendix 1 – A summary of percentage scores for corporate governance approach.

Appendix 2 – Annual statements of compliance on policies or procedures by the relevant responsible officer.

The Chief Legal Officer concluded that the council's arrangements for corporate governance had operated well and the approach requirements of the council's revised Code of Corporate Governance had been substantially met in 2010

During the year ahead, the focus would be on ensuring that the revised Code was embedded across the whole council and the necessary reviews of governance systems and procedures took place when required.

It was recommended that the Council Executive :-

1. Note that the revised Code had increased the number of governance requirements significantly compared to the previous Code, and that the governance approach requirements of the code had been substantially met in 2010/11;
2. Agree that the items in the current Code identified by the Corporate Governance Working Group as no longer required be deleted for 2011/12;
3. Note that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had agreed that the current guidance relating to the committee report template should be expanded, to reflect the requirement for committee reports to identify:
  - Any changes required to the council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers;
  - Implications for implementation of the Single Outcome Agreement; and
  - Implications for performance indicators service delivery
4. Note that the corporate governance arrangements within the council would continue to be a key strategic priority for the council in the year ahead, particularly having regard to the current financial climate of reduced funding and increased demand for services.
5. Agree that the focus in 2011/12 should be on ensuring that the revised Code was embedded across the whole council and the necessary reviews of governance systems and procedures took place when required.