



Report to: Audit and Governance Committee, 18th September 2019

Report of: Deputy Director - Governance

Subject: CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN: PROGRESS REPORT

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee notes the progress being made to deliver the actions set out in the Corporate Governance Action Plan.

2. Background

2.1 At its July meeting the Committee approved a Corporate Governance Action Plan for 2019/20. The Plan sets out a number of actions to be delivered over the coming municipal year. Each action identifies the officer who is accountable for delivery and the governance oversight body. The Committee may agree for new actions to be added to the Plan at any time in consultation with the Council's statutory officers.

3. Action Plan Progress

3.1 The Committee agreed that progress against the Plan should be reported at each meeting. The Plan is set out at Appendix 1 with a new final column added which summarises the progress since July. The Plan has since been reviewed by the Corporate Governance Board and actions updated. The Committee may wish to provide guidance or comment on the following aspects which are under development.

3.2 **Toolkit for Members on Outside Bodies.** The aim of this toolkit is to enable Members in maximising the use of their significant time commitments and skills in supporting outside bodies, ensuring the Council's strategic objectives can benefit from these appointments and ensuring that Members are appropriately informed of and protected from the risks associated with these appointments. It is proposed that this includes the following:

- guidance for Members on types of outside bodies, duties, liabilities, managing conflicts of interest;
- good governance checklist for Members to assess the "healthy governance" of the outside body and its relevance to City Council objectives;
- list of common policies, duties, risks, responsibilities that may apply to the outside body;
- guidance for Members on financial best practice and risk management;
- FAQs/quick reference one-page guide;

- useful links to national resources;
- the agreed template for Members to report back to Standards Committee annually.

3.3 **Member Training on Corporate Governance.** The Standards Committee has a remit to ensure that high standards of conduct are promoted and arranging for training on the local Code of Conduct. The Council's Code of Conduct will be reviewed later this year and so this training aspect will be considered by Standards Committee.

In terms of Member training more widely, the Audit and Governance Committee may wish to comment on the possible extent of a Member training programme, to be developed under the Action Plan. It should be noted that with the exception of Planning Committee, training for Members is essentially optional. It is acknowledged that there are many demands on Members' time and so training must be relevant and useful. It is proposed that Members' preferences on training generally are surveyed as part of the annual review of the Council's committee system, which the Deputy Director Governance is required to undertake during September and October with a view to reporting any required constitutional changes to Council at its 22 October meeting.

The Committee may wish to consider:

- The extent to which any training should be mandatory/strongly encouraged and what any of these "core" topic areas might be
- The format in which Members prefer to receive training- presentations, seminars, paper briefings, electronic modules
- The frequency of training and whether it might span a three year period to cover an electoral term
- The extent to which Members may wish to call for specific training on an ad hoc basis to support a specific Committee or decision-making item
- Previous experiences of training both positive and negative which can inform the planning of the training programme.

4. **Implications**

4.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

None.

4.2 Legal and Governance Implications

This report sets out the actions underway and there are no specific legal or governance implications arising from them at this stage.

4.3 Risk Implications

None.

4.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

This report set out the actions underway and there are no specific corporate or policy implications arising from them at this stage.

- 4.5 Equality Implications
None.
- 4.6 Human Resources Implications
None.
- 4.7 Health and Safety Implications
None.
- 4.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications
None.

Ward(s): All wards
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Background Papers: None.