

BEST VALUE COMMISSIONERS

Governance Board

Wednesday 31 July 2024, 14:30 – 16:30

Council House, Room 125

Board Members

John Biggs, Co-chair and Commissioner
John Coughlan, Co-chair and Commissioner
Graeme Betts, Acting Chief Executive
Rishi Shori, Deputy Chief Executive
Deborah Carter-Hughes, Assistant Director, Legal
Julia Lynch, Assistant Director, Legal
Jennifer Grey, Political Assistant, Liberal Democrat Group
Amerdip Kaur, Head of Special Projects
Marie Rosenthal, Interim City Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
Councillor John Cotton, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Robert Alden, Leader of the Conservative Group
Katy Fox, Director of People Services
Craig Price, Principal Group Auditor
Elizabeth Thomas, DHLUC
Fiona Greenway, Director of Finance & S151 Officer
Mohammed Sajid, Interim Head of Financial Strategy
Councillor Robert Pocock, Labour Party
Chrissie Farrugia, DHLUC National Intervention Specialist
John Hutton, Political Advisor
Councillor Roger Harmer, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Max Caller, Lead Commissioner
Pam Parkes, Commissioner

Apologies

Councillor Sharon Thompson, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party

1 Welcome & Introductions

1.1 John Biggs introduced the meeting and welcomed attendees.

2 Previous Minutes

2.1 Councillor Robert Alden noted that the wording in the last minutes at 4.3 should reflect that training was “insufficient” as opposed to “non-existent” as this was not his wording in the meeting. John Biggs agreed to amend this on the previous minutes. The minutes were then approved by the board.

3 Audit – Internal Audit

- 3.1 Mandatory training has begun today with Audit Committee members around financial reporting, internal and external audit and a focus on the work plan.
- 3.2 **Action: The Board must agree a Work Plan and Training Schedule when the new Chair of Audit Committee begins in their role.**
- 3.3 The Professional Leadership Development Scheme (PLDS) will cease operation.

The Commissioners:

Max Caller CBE, John Coughlan CBE, Chris Tambini, Pam Parkes FCIPD, Jackie Belton, Myron Hrycyk, Lord John Hutton, John Biggs.

- 3.4 Legal are currently considering and reviewing the integrated risk management and internal audit IT solution.
- 3.5 The Annual Governance Statement should be driving the improvements to Audit.
- 3.6 The Council now have access to a more detailed view of the Governance risks.
- 3.7 **Action: The Board should review the findings of today's first Audit training session.**
- 3.8 **Action: The Board should consider how to escalate these findings to Cabinet.**

4 Governance Stabilisation Plan Update

- 4.1 The Council are on Month 5 of the reporting period.
- 4.2 The draft Annual Governance Statement should have been reviewed by Audit this month, but this is delayed and showing "at risk" as today's Audit session was used for the mandatory training.
- 4.3 **Action: The new Annual Governance Statement should be presented at the next Board meeting.**
- 4.4 The Scrutiny Blueprint is still a work in progress following the feedback from the last Board meeting.
- 4.5 Max Caller commented that there is still a "gap" between who can be appointed, where can they report to, where are they accountable and the skillset needed. The current work does not seem to encapsulate this.
- 4.6 **Action: For the next Board meeting can a paper be presented on Partnerships and Performance Management.**

5 Culture Change/Reframed Values/Expected Behaviours

- 5.1 Work is being carried out on reviewing the Appraisal process for Council employees to make it more approachable. There is still a lot of work to be done on this.
- 5.2 Pam Parkes noted that it is key that it is important to engage with the Unions and keep them involved as these culture changes begin to be set.

6 Future Agendas

- 6.1 Future agendas should consider addressing issues surrounding conflicts of interest.
- 6.2 Future agendas should offer further conversation surrounding the involvement of the Unions within the Governance changes.

7 AOB

- 7.1 There was no other business.