

REVIEWING THE LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE

18 SEPTEMBER 2017

Purpose of Meeting

The group received a presentation which provided an update on the review to the local code of governance. Attendees were taken through the new Framework then the matter was opened up for general discussion.

Summary of Advice

How do we demonstrate that appropriate values and behaviours are embedded in the Council, e.g. behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law?

The group felt that the Council already has a number of codes, systems and protocols in place which outlines the values and behaviours expected across the organisation and management cascade this to teams to ensure that they are embedded within the culture of the council. Similarly staff are given the opportunity on a regular basis to feed into this process e.g. team brief, employee survey, A&D's and one to ones and this is all evidenced in the inspection/peer process however there is always room for improvement to ensure that the Council does not become complacent. It was also noted that a very high percentage of the workforce are happy to work for the council and think it's a good place to work. It was felt appropriate to have an annual review of councillor training needs to cater for any ongoing changes to roles and remit.

Do the Council's arrangements for Councillor induction and training contribute towards developing its capacity, including the capability of its leadership and councillors generally?

The group felt that the right mechanisms were in place through the member development framework. However it was felt that it would be helpful if elected members were reminded which training was compulsory and if specific training could be delivered as councillor's move from one committee responsibility to another. Refresher training would also be helpful especially as some councillors have long length of service.

Probity and Ethics training needed to be refreshed every term of office.

Is the Council engaging appropriately with all stakeholders and particularly the public?

The group felt that an obvious successful example was the budget consultation process and it was recognised that the council consults in a vast variety of ways now than ever before - e.g. Facebook, twitter, council website (as well as face to face and in paper format also should that be requested). It was also noted that the Council's website usage has increased 10% in the last year alone.

There has also been a big rise in the number of young people also wanting to be involved in the council's view point panel and it was recognised that the use of

videos/animations and video messages is getting the message out to far many more people than previously.

It was recognised that various mediums were reaching far more people but it was also recognised that we also have an increasingly ageing population and some people do not have internet access or are comfortable with the use of social media, so it must be recognised that the Council still need to communicate in a democratic way.

The way the Council feeds back to the public also needs to consider the wide variety of sectors of the population and the correct communication mechanism must also fit the audience. A communications strategy would be useful in this regard.

Does the Council manage risk appropriately through proper internal controls?

Councillor Turnbull reported that he was new to the Audit and Standards Committee and he was struggling to understand Risk especially in relation to the recent Grenfell Tower incident. It was agreed that training and briefing sessions would be organised specifically for him as a matter of urgency.

The group felt that the internal controls in place to manage risk were as robust as they could be, although they must be reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to be as robust as they can be and that they are always fit for purpose to ensure that services are delivered and to protect the people of the Borough. There should be an annual update training on risk for members of the Audit and Standards Committee.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Jim Turnbull, Councillor John McElroy and Mr Brinley Jones

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martin Harrison, Marisa Jobling, Andrea Tickner, Colin Huntington, Craig Oakes, Keith Purvis, John Jopling, Peter Udall, Elaine Devaney, Steve Horne, Helen Conway