

Corporate Governance Panel Minutes

12th January 2022

Attendees: Cllr Eluned Stenner\Deb Gronow\Rob Tranter\Liz Lucas\Stephen Harris

Chair: Stephen Harris

1. Apologies

Richard Edmunds (Ed)
Sue Richards
Cllr Margaret Sargent

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Update on Accounts – Approved by Council on 14th October 2021.
Addendum reported received which sets out the recommendations arising from the audit process and officers have responded. Report and responses to be considered by the Governance & Audit Committee on 25th January 2022.

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23rd September 2021 were therefore approved.

3. 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement and progress on areas for improvement

An update was provided on the four areas for action in the current financial year:-

- Risk Management Strategy –updated and draft document on agenda for Governance & Audit Committee on 25th January 2022
- Cyber Security Strategy – strategy to be approved in this financial year to enable it to sit alongside the Counter Fraud Strategy. Cyber Security Strategy going to Digital Leadership Group on 31st January 2022 and scheduled for Governance & Audit Committee in April 2022. Strategy for Critical Systems also going to Digital Leadership Group on 31st January 2022.
- Audit Wales report ‘Delivering Good Governance – Caerphilly County Borough Council’ – **Action: Ed/Sue to provide an update via email.**
- Audit Wales report ‘Financial Sustainability Assessment – Caerphilly County Borough Council’ – recommendations received relating to how we do our budgeting and looking at how we align our MTFP with the Transformation Programme. Cabinet report due to be issued for draft Budget Proposals for next year. MTFP been looked at over a 3-year period and work undertaken to identify when the pressures may arise.

4. 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement and forward planning

Three issues:-

- Process – Details not yet received from WG in respect of accounts closure deadlines for the 2021/22 financial year. Previous two years WG have given special dispensation due to other commitments arising from Covid. WG may extend timescale again this year due to pressure on Auditors. DG to start process of HoS questionnaires and gathering information. Report also required for Year End Opinion.
- Format of document – No fixed format however example provided. Some LA's include lots of pictures and diagrams. Consideration needs to be given to the accessibility criteria as we have to comply with the Regulations.
- Horizon scanning – identifying matters that could be in next years year end areas for improvement.

Action: DG to follow the normal process to start gathering data to inform the AGS. SH/DG to consider whether there is a need to change the current format. Update to be provided at next Corporate Governance Review Panel.

5. Governance & Audit Committee FWP

Additional Governance & Audit Committee to take place on 16th March 2022 due to the significant number of agenda items which could not be included on the agenda for 25th January 2022.

Note that the Anti-Fraud and Cyber Security reports may need to be dealt with confidentially so an exempt session may be necessary for the Governance & Audit Committee scheduled for 19th April 2022.

Action: RT will ascertain if criteria for an exempt meeting is met and advise.

Action: SH/DG will map out future meeting dates and agenda items post-election.

6. Review of Risk Management Strategy

Any comments on the document to be provided to Sue Richards/Ros Roberts as soon as possible.

7. Update on Governance & Audit Committee Lay Member recruitment process

Full Council agreed to change the Terms of Reference for the Governance & Audit Committee to fixed number of 12 Members. Requirement for 4 new Lay Members. Advertised for 3 new Lay Members and received 2 application

forms which are very positive. One vacancy left to fill which will be readvertised. Interview Panel to take place on 21st January 2022. Noted that we are in a much better place to some other Local Authorities.

DG working with other Local Authorities to discuss possibility of shared/cross border arrangements. Lay Members need to be in place from May 2022.

8. AOB

Meeting cycle for Corporate Governance Review Panel – Meetings to be scheduled 3 weeks in advance of Governance & Audit Committee.

Action: DG to liaise with Emma Sullivan re: meeting dates post May and advise LF of dates in order that Corporate Governance Review Panel meetings can be scheduled.

Action: DG/LF to liaise to arrange additional Corporate Governance Review Panel meeting in mid-February prior to Governance & Audit Committee on 16th March 2022 and mid-March prior to Governance & Audit Committee on 19th April 2022.

9. Date of Next Meeting

16th February 2022 at 10am