

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

20 September 2018

- * Councillor Richard Billington (Chairman)
- * Councillor Alexandra Chesterfield (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Nils Christiansen | * Mrs Maria Angel MBE |
| Councillor Colin Cross | Mr Charles Hope |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | Ms Gerry Reffo |
| * Councillor Mike Hurdle | * Mr Ian Symes |
| * Councillor Nigel Kearse | |

*Present

Councillors Caroline Reeves and Tony Rooth were also in attendance.

CGS25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nils Christiansen and Colin Cross, and from Mr Charles Hope and Ms Gerry Reffo.

Councillor Caroline Reeves attended as a substitute for Councillor Cross.

CGS26 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

CGS27 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 26 July and 7 August 2018. The Chairman signed the minutes.

CGS28 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2018-19 - PERIOD 3 (APRIL TO JUNE 2018)

The Committee considered a report that set out the financial monitoring position for period 3 (April 2018 to June 2018).

The report summarised the projected outturn position for the Council's general fund revenue account, based on actual and accrued data for this period. Officers were projecting a reduction in net expenditure on the general fund revenue account of £526,541. This was the result of a reduction in the statutory Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge to the General Fund to make provision for the repayment of past capital debt. This lower than budgeted MRP charge reflected a re-profiling of capital schemes, which also had a positive impact on the level of cash balances and assumed external borrowing costs, which had combined to produce higher than budgeted net interest receipts.

A surplus on the Housing Revenue Account, due to lower staffing and repairs and maintenance costs would enable a projected transfer of £7.29 million to the new build reserve and £2.5 million to the reserve for future capital at year-end, which had been £50,795 higher than budgeted.

Officers were making progress against significant capital projects on the approved programme as outlined in section 7 of the report. The Council was expected to spend £75.7 million on its capital schemes by the end of the financial year.

The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance the capital programme was expected to be £52.38 million by 31 March 2019, against an estimated position of £71.15 million, which was due to slippage on both the approved and provisional capital programme, as detailed in the report.

The Council held £122 million of investments and £221.6 million of external borrowing as at 30 June 2018, which included £193.1 million of HRA loans. Officers confirmed that the Council had complied with its Prudential indicators in the period, which had been set in February 2018 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

Having considered the report, the Committee

RESOLVED: That the results of the Council's financial monitoring for the period April to June 2018 be noted.

Reason:

To allow the Committee to undertake its role in relation to scrutinising the Council's finances.

CGS29 EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARDS - PROPOSED REVIEW OF STRUCTURE AND REMIT

The Committee noted that the Council, at its meeting on 24 July 2018, had agreed to change the names and remits of the two Executive Advisory Boards (EABs) to reflect the new fundamental themes in the Council's revised Corporate Plan.

Councillors were reminded that the LGA Peer Review last year recognised that EABs were a 'work in progress', but also noted that there was still some confusion around their role. It had been suggested that the Council should review ways to make the work of the EABs more effective and perhaps look at focusing their work around topic based task and finish groups.

The report now before the Committee was the product of that review, which had taken account of difficulties and issues with the operation of the EABs in terms of work programming, confusion around their remit, cancellation of meetings due to insufficient business, and reluctance to discuss some matters at an early stage in a public forum with webcasted meetings.

The report had set out three Options as follows:

Option 1: To disband the two EABs and establish a single overarching EAB, commissioning task groups to look at specific topics related to delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.

Option 2: To disband the two EABs and establish topic based advisory boards commissioned directly by the Executive on ad hoc basis.

Option 3: To make no changes.

The report had recommended Option 1 on the basis that a single EAB would provide greater flexibility with more frequent meetings, greater control by non-Executive councillors in terms of topic selection, with greater use of informal task groups to look at those topics. A single EAB would enable more streamlined work programming, a key element of which, it was proposed, would be discussion of selected major capital projects between provisional budget approval by full Council and submission of the business case for final approval by Executive to transfer schemes to the approved programme.

It was envisaged that the single EAB would comprise 15 members; and would meet up to 10 times a year rather than two EABs (each currently comprising 12 members) meeting six times a year.

The suggested terms of reference for the single EAB and a timetable of meetings for the remainder of the 2018-19 municipal year and 2019-20 were set out in the report.

The Committee, having considered the three options set out in the report, felt on balance that Option 1 provided the greater benefits and

RECOMMEND: That the Council agrees, with immediate effect,

- (1) the two existing Executive Advisory Boards be disbanded;
- (2) a single Executive Advisory Board (to be named "Executive Advisory Board"), comprising 15 councillors, be established, with up to seven substitute members per political group;
- (3) the Terms of Reference of the Executive Advisory Board, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be approved; and
- (4) the timetable of meetings of the Executive Advisory Board for the remainder of the 2018-19 municipal year, and the 2019-20 municipal year, as shown in Appendix 2 to this report be adopted.

Reason:

To introduce a more efficient and effective EAB configuration.

CGS30 REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING PROCEDURE RULES

The Committee considered a report on a number of proposed revisions to the Public Speaking Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution, which had been proposed in order to improve clarity and consistency, and in particular to address issues on which the Rules were silent.

The review had also proposed some amendments to the Council's Petition Scheme, in order to address data protection issues arising from the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation, and to make provision within the Scheme for the separate procedures for dealing with petitions by the new Guildford Joint Committee.

Details of the proposed amendments to Public Speaking Procedure Rules and Petition Scheme were set out, by way of tracked changes, in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council.

Having considered the proposed amendments, the Committee

RECOMMEND: That the proposed revisions to the Council's Public Speaking Procedure Rules and Petition Scheme, as set out in the report submitted to the Committee and at Appendix 1 thereto, be adopted.

Reason:

To improve the general clarity and consistency of the Council's Public Speaking Procedure Rules.

CGS31 COUNCILLOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered a report outlining the work undertaken by the Councillor Development Steering Group to date, including the feedback from councillors in respect of training events held during the year and the ongoing training and development programme. The report also outlined the work being carried out in terms of developing a dedicated microsite on the Council's website for prospective candidates that want to become a councillor, and the provision of an online e-learning management system for councillors.

Details of the current training and development programme, the programme for the forthcoming “Becoming a Councillor” event on 29 October 2018, and the induction programme for newly elected councillors (May to July 2019), were appended to the report.

The Committee commented on the high quality of the training provided for councillors, but expressed its concern over the poor turnout of councillors at recent training events, particularly bearing in mind the cost of external specialist trainers.

Having considered the report, the Committee

RESOLVED:

That the valuable work being undertaken by the Councillor Development Steering Group in developing a clear structured plan for councillor development that responds both to the Council’s corporate priorities and councillors’ individual training needs, be noted.

Reason:

To recognise the importance the Council attaches to councillors’ training and development.

CGS32 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee, having considered its updated work programme for the 2018-19 municipal year

RESOLVED: That the work programme for the 2018-19 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Committee, be approved.

Reason:

To allow the Committee to maintain and update its work programme.

The meeting finished at 8.10 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date