



REPORT of CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

**to
COUNCIL
8 SEPTEMBER 2016**

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 At the last meeting of the Council on 14 July, it was resolved:

“That with the development and use of the Modern.Gov system, the Council moves towards paperless working through a transitional period of up to six months, subject to review, during which hard copy agenda packs would continue to be produced and circulated to Members upon request.”

1.2 The purpose of this paper is to seek permission for the Corporate Governance Working Group to lead the review and report back to the Council in order to ensure that there is a firm commitment to move to paperless working after the six month transitional period. At the most recent meeting of the Working Group, it was also concluded that a terms of reference for the Working Group should be submitted to Council for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) that the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Governance Working Group (as shown in **APPENDIX 1**) be approved;
- (ii) that in order to maximise the use of the Modern.Gov system, hard copies of the agenda packs for all Committees will only be sent to Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees from this point onwards, and that it will only be available to other Members upon request (by contacting Committee Services). The Corporate Governance Working Group will receive a regular update on the number of paper copies issued to Members in order to encourage a greater take up of the Modern.Gov system.
- (iii) that all Members proactively take up the use of the Modern.Gov system and seek one to one training from IT / Committee Services where required;
- (iv) that the Corporate Governance Working Group should report back to the Council after the six month transitional period on the move towards paperless working;
- (v) that the Corporate Governance Working Group will be working with Members of South Eastern Area Planning Committee to review the location of the

Committee meetings and that a report will be submitted to a future Council meeting for consideration; and

- (vi) that the Corporate Governance Working Group will explore the feasibility of introducing live streaming of Committee meetings and report back to Council.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Terms of Reference

- 3.1.1 The Corporate Governance Working Group (the Working Group) has been considering a number of issues recently including the move towards paperless working and the new approach for reception and adoption of the Minutes of Committees, which were subsequently considered by Council. The Working Group met recently to consider the draft terms of reference for Council to approve, which sets out the scope of work for the Group to follow.

- 3.1.2 The terms of reference is attached in **APPENDIX 1**.

3.2 Paperless working

- 3.2.1 In an effort to progress paperless working, the Corporate Governance Working Group should be given a key role to ensure that a review is undertaken after the six month transitional period has elapsed and that a report will be submitted to the Council to report the conclusion of the review.
- 3.2.2 It is recognised that a small group of Members have not used Modern.Gov in any way despite the fact that contact has been made by officers. The Corporate Governance Working Group suggested the following ways to engage with Members in order to maximise the take up of Modern.Gov:
- Hard copies of agenda papers will only be sent to Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Committees and that paper copies will only be sent out to other Members upon request. The Corporate Governance Working Group will be receiving a regular update on the number of paper copies issued and sent to Members.
 - All Members should proactively take up the use of the Modern.Gov system and to seek one to one training from IT / Committee Services where required.
 - Members of the public can continue to access the Committee papers on the website as well as Modern.Gov system and some hard copies of the paper will be available at the meeting.

3.3 South Eastern Area Planning Committee

- 3.3.1 At the most recent meeting of the Corporate Governance Working Group, it was suggested by Members that there are a number of issues associated with the current location of the South Eastern Area Planning Committee meeting including the lack of sound recording, health and safety and the size of the room. The Working Group concluded that it should seek approval from the Council to work with the South

Eastern Area Planning Committee in order to review its current arrangement and report back to the Council on its findings.

3.4 **Live Streaming of Committees**

- 3.4.1 Members of the Corporate Governance Working Group recognised that in order to modernise our Committee meetings, not only should there be a commitment to move towards paperless working, the Council should also consider the introduction of live streaming of Committees and Council meetings.
- 3.4.2 It was noted that the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council received further information at this year's Local Government Association (LGA) conference, which would warrant a feasibility analysis to be carried out by the Working Group as the associated costs of the live streaming of committees may have been updated. The Working Group has also suggested engaging with other Members to visit other local authorities in order to see how the system works in practice.
- 3.4.3 The Corporate Governance Working Group will be leading the work of the feasibility analysis and that a business case will be submitted to the Finance and Corporate Services (F&CS) Committee for consideration, which will detail the level of resources it will require to implement live streaming of committee meetings. It is envisaged that a report will be brought back to a future meeting of the Council in order to enable a final decision to be made whether to introduce live streaming of Committee meetings. The report will set out the recommendations from both the Corporate Governance Working Group and the F&CS Committee.

4. **LINKS WITH CORPORATE GOALS**

- 4.1 The review and updating of the corporate governance arrangements of the Council underpins the decision making processes of the Council, is in part a matter of compliance with the law and is also linked to the overarching principle of being efficient and effective.

5. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – It is important that the Council is able openly to explain, through well-presented and user-friendly constitutional documentation, the way in which it is set up and operates, and how it conducts its business. The role of the Corporate Governance Working Group is to ensure that the Council's governance procedures are seen as open and transparent.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None identified.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The proposed change towards paperless working will result in savings in printing and postage cost (estimated at around

£5,000). The move to live streaming of Committee meetings will however require a budget growth.

- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None identified.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None identified.

Corporate Governance Working Group Membership:

Councillors B S Beale MBE, M F L Durham, P G L Elliott, A S Fluker, Miss M R Lewis and Mrs M E Thompson.

Background Papers: None.

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