

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Governance Committee	22 June 2016

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REPORT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To inform the Committee of the results of the Skills and Knowledge Questionnaire that had recently been undertaken with members of the Committee

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- Members are asked to discuss paragraphs 10 and 11 and propose alternative ways to deliver a more effective training programme for members of Governance Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- In 2015/16, all Members and officers of the Governance Committee undertook a questionnaire on Governance skills and knowledge to identify what level of understanding the membership was perceived to have. The questionnaire was completed individually and was a self-assessment approach.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	√

BACKGROUND

- The Governance Committee is made up of Elected Members that are independent of the Executive and Scrutiny functions, Statutory Officers that included the Head of Paid Service/Section 151 Officer, Heads of Shared Finance and Assurance, the Council's Monitoring Officer and External Auditors.
- Recent communication via The Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police contained a recommendation for Governance Committees to undertake an evaluation of its members skills and knowledge set and this course of action was supported by the authority.

7. The role of the Governance Committee is quite specialised, and Members who have received appropriate training should be able to ascertain:
- If Internal Audit is adequate
 - that all the audit plans are appropriately focused
 - that responses to audit recommendations are satisfactory
 - that appropriate action is taken if things go wrong and
 - that there are comprehensive and robust processes for risk management and production of the Annual Governance Statement.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

8. When evaluating the results of the questionnaire, shown at Appendix 1, reveal that Members feel their level of understanding gained by current training methods isn't sufficient enough for them to fulfil their role on Governance Committee effectively and that their overall level of understanding of the Committee's roles and functions could be improved upon.
9. Historically, training for members in this area has been delivered by in-house methods by Council officers at the start of the committee year, with particular attention being given to newer councillors who may be sitting on Committee for the first time. However, in response to the questionnaire results, the Committee may wish to consider alternative delivery methods for training, for example:
- Employing a specialised external provider
 - Completing online training modules
 - Attending a short training session prior to the actual Committee, that would focus on the main items of business to be discussed on the agenda for that meeting
 - Schedule a programme of suitable sessions throughout the year that would be delivered internally by Council officers and opened up to other Members.
10. One of the main difficulties that Members may also wish to give consideration to is that the membership frequently changes in line with Council elections and political group appointments, constant membership changes, against a backdrop of the Committee only meeting four times a year, can make consistency of knowledge levels difficult to maintain.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

11. The work of the Governance Committee meets four times a year and covers three main areas relating to the **Role of Governance Committee and Auditors**, including its governance, risk management and internal control arrangements, **Code of Conduct** and **Financial Matters**, including the Statement of Accounts (SOA) and Treasury Management (TM). It was also recently recommended by the Member Support Working Group that any new member appointed to Governance Committee should undertake an overview of the above before attending any of the meetings. This year, the two newly appointed members are undertaking such training on 13 June.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

13. No comments.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

14. The training is for the benefit of members and it is appropriate to ensure it is presented in a way that is accessible to them. The best way to ensure this is to seek feedback from the members to be trained. The first step was to use the surveys from the last training as a basis for this discussion. It would be inappropriate to tailor individual training so ideally the discussion will produce agreement by consensus on the best approach to training for the committee.

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Dianne Scambler	5034	8 June 2016	***