

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : STANDARDS COMMITTEE **ITEM: 3**
DATE : 28 MARCH 2012
REPORT OF : HEAD of LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR : CHRIS ASTALL

SUBJECT : THE CODE OF CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE 2007 – ACTION PLAN
PROGRESS REPORT

Summary

1. This is a report on progress against the action plan concerned with corporate governance.

Recommended That:

- [1] **Members note progress on core principles 1-6 of the 2007 Code of Corporate Governance action plan, and pending a revised code, sign off the plan.**

Background

2. The Authority must ensure that there are appropriate governance arrangements.
3. In 2007 the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives published a framework entitled *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* (the Framework).
4. The Authority decided to measure its governance arrangements against the six core principles of the Framework:
 - Focusing on the purpose of Authority and outcomes for community and creating & implementing local vision.
 - Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
 - Promoting values and demonstrating the values of good governance through high standards of conduct and behaviour
 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and challenge
 - Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

- Engaging with local communities and stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability
5. The Authority produced a Corporate Governance Action Plan and has monitored it regularly. More recently, this monitoring reduced as progress had slowed (as more elements were reaching full compliance) and impetus was lost because a new framework was anticipated.
 6. The new framework has not yet materialised and it is not clear how quickly this will be made available. It now seems appropriate to report again on progress, possibly for a last time in this format.
 7. The entire Corporate Governance Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1. This shows a range of evidence and actions which aim to explain the Authority's approach to those issues highlighted in the framework. It is fair to say that the approach is not entirely consistent and that there are even contradictory sections. However, the overall assessment is very positive and with an impending refresh of the framework, officers felt that it was time to consider concluding work 'under' this action plan. That is not to say that work will cease, but the plan appears to have served its purpose.
 8. There are a small number of areas with scores that suggest that the Authority has not reached full compliance. However, these assessments can be subjective and all elements will be revisited when the new framework is being considered. For now, officers will concentrate upon the following areas:
 - Refresh of Scheme of Delegation / Financial and Contract Rules
 - New Standards Regime
 - Approval / Monitoring arrangements for partnerships
 9. Members are encouraged to ask for clarification of any elements of the Action Plan.

Impact Assessment:

Financial, Equality and Diversity and Environmental

10. This report represents a summary of a number of actions that contribute to the Authority's governance arrangements. Where appropriate, an action is assessed by the officer responsible for that particular area of the Action Plan.

Legal

11. Compliance with the Framework assists the Authority in securing appropriate governance arrangements.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Corporate Governance Action Plan