

Minutes of the Corporate Governance Group

1st May 2015 @ 10am

Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall

Present:	
Cllr Pam Palmer (PP)	Executive Board Member (Community & Rural Affairs)
Cllr Jeff Edmunds (JE)	Executive Board Member (Resources)
Cllr David Jenkins (DJ)	Chair of Audit Committee (Observer)
Paul Thomas (PT)	Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Moore (CM)	s151 officer
Linda Rees Jones (LRJ)	Head of Administration and Law
Phil Sexton (PS)	Head of Audit, Procurement & ICT
Noelwyn Daniel (ND)	Performance & Information Manager
Helen Pugh (HP)	Audit & Risk Manager

Apologies:	
Wendy Walters (WW)	Assistant Chief Executive
Alison Wood (AW)	HR Manager

Item No	Discussion / Action	Responsible Officer
1	Apologies As noted above	
2	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting / Matters Arising The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 30th March 2015 were approved as correct.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>WAO Safeguarding report – Action: LRJ reaffirmed that a formal record is maintained of all Whistleblower activity. The records are accessible to the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Grants Panel – Follow up on DJ's suggestion at Audit Committee that Chair of Audit should attend the Grants Panel as an Observer. The Audit Committee were supportive of this proposal. The request stemmed from the ongoing concerns about the grants issues reported by WAO.</p> <p>The Grants Panel is an Officer Group. Current established arrangements are that Minutes from the Panel meetings are presented to the Audit Committee. For the Audit Committee Chair to attend this Group, any proposal needs to be considered and authorised by Council.</p>	PS / LRJ

	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CM to consult with LRJ to consider a referral of this issue to Members for determination / potential amendment to the Constitution ie should the Chair of the Audit Committee attend the Officer Grants Panel (or a part of the Officer Grant Panel meeting) in an “Observer Capacity” ? <p>Action outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To respond to WAO report a detailed analysis / comparison on grant certification issues to be produced <p>Full Modular Constitution – LRJ reiterated that hardly any of the other Welsh Authorities are fully adopting the Modular Constitution. The majority of Authorities are applying a similar approach as us ie reviewing as and when required and focusing on specific areas requiring review.</p> <p>Schools DBS – HR team have now visited the schools that were not up to date with DBS. On line system being introduced to check DBS more efficiently which means there will only be a 12 hour turnaround time in processing the DBS. Some Headteachers are not compliant and these issues have been raised with the Director of Education & Children’s Services and the Director of Community Services.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed that PT speak directly to the responsible Headteachers. If the DBS information is then not forthcoming PT to draft a letter (copied to members of this Group) to the Headteachers of the schools that are not fully compliant with DBS. <p>Discussion around the general Governance and appointing of Governors to schools followed. The Group felt they wanted a better understanding of Governance arrangements in Schools.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gareth Morgans – Chief Education Officer be invited along to the next meeting to discuss the Governors arrangements and responsibilities in Schools 	<p>CM / LRJ</p> <p>CM</p> <p>PT</p> <p>HP</p>
3	<p>WLGA Review of Governance</p> <p>Extraordinary meeting for Council to be held on 17th June 2015, where Members of the working group will present and speak about progress to date</p> <p>Progress so far, Action Plans being followed up, shaping things to go forward and Members will have ownership of Constitution. It was felt that good work was being achieved and that the changes are ensuring that the Authority is moving in the right direction.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that LRJ continues keeps the Governance 	<p>LRJ</p>

	Group informed of the progress being made.	
4	<p>Corporate Assessment</p> <p>4th report has been presented to CMT providing monthly updates, progress and recommendations of how taking things forward. ND gave a summary of what has been reported to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Management Team – HoS business plans positions looked at, quality etc looked at, best practice identified and feedback to HoS - Strategic Groups taken on responsibility for their own areas - HoS challenge meetings with Executive Board Members due in July 2015 - Cover sheets to Executive Board – includes Equality Impact Assessment <p>Document request list received from WAO for the Corporate Assessment Review due to start on 12 October 2015 for two weeks</p> <p>Review on HR due in June, as well as Performance, IT and Asset Management.</p> <p>ND meeting in June 2015 with Executive Board Members and the opposition lead to outline and inform them of the Corporate Assessment.</p> <p>Code of Governance discussed and the need for its review.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update at next meeting on the Annual Improvement Report from WAO that was expected by 8 April 2015 • Code of Governance – request made that this be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting for the Group to view 	ND
5	<p>WAO Further Assurance</p> <p>CM brought to the Group's attention letters received from WAO '<i>Audit Enquires to those charged with Governance and management</i>' relating to Carmarthenshire CC and Dyfed Pension Fund. WAO ask a number of Management and Governance questions, for which we need to respond. WAO are formally seeking our documented consideration and understanding on a number of governance areas that impact on their audit of our financial statements. These considerations are relevant to both the Council's management and those charged with governance (the Audit Committee).</p> <p>The information provided will inform WAO's understanding of the Council and its business processes and support their work in providing an audit opinion on our 2014/15 financial statements. It is the intention to take the response to the Audit Committee for approval. It was agreed the response should also be brought to this group to consider.</p>	

	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the responses to WAO's letters '<i>Audit Enquires to those charged with Governance and management</i>' be brought to this Group prior to being taken to Audit Committee 	CM
6	<p>Annual Governance Statement (AGS)</p> <p>The 2013/14 AGS Action Plan was reviewed and an update given on each action item.</p> <p>2014/15 AGS needs to be produced and approved by the Group to be incorporated into the draft Statement of Accounts to presented to Audit Committee in July 2015</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Head of Service to review the AGS and provide updated paragraphs for the sections relevant to their services for 2014/15 – updated paragraphs to be sent through to HP to enable her to pull together 2014/15 AGS and Action plan 	All
7	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Ceredigion visit – Cllr Pam Palmer and Noelwyn Daniel updated the Group on their visit to Ceredigion CC to understand their approach to governance. Where it was noted that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HoD challenge HoS, Performance challenge and indicators used Standards review Executive Board Members meet with HoS every 3 months <p>No other issues Meeting closed @ 11:30am</p>	
	<p><i>Date of next meeting and future meetings:</i></p> <p>7th September 2015 10am 24th November 2015 10am</p> <p>All Meetings in the Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall</p>	