


Minutes of the Corporate Governance Group

7th September 2015 @ 10.30am

Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall

Present:	
Cllr Pam Palmer (PP)	Executive Board Member (Communities)
Cllr David Jenkins (DJ)	Executive Board Member (Resources)
Paul Thomas (PT)	Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Moore (CM)	Director Corporate Services
Linda Rees Jones (LRJ)	Head of Administration and Law
Owen Bowen (OB)	Chief Accountant
Alison Wood (AW)	HR Manager
Noelwyn Daniel (ND)	Performance & Information Manager
Gareth Morgans (GM)	Head of Education Services (Item 2 only)
Llew Thomas (LT)	School Governance & Admissions Manager (Item 2 only)
Cath Searle (CS)	Senior Auditor (minute taker)

Apologies:	
Cllr Calum Higgins (CH)	Chair of Audit Committee (Observer)
Wendy Walters (WW)	Assistant Chief Executive
Phil Sexton (PS)	Head of Audit, Risk & Procurement
Helen Pugh (HP)	Audit & Risk Manager

Item No	Discussion / Action	Responsible Officer
1	<p>Apologies As noted above</p> <p>N.B. CM to Chair meeting in PS's absence</p>	
2	<p>Governance in Schools</p> <p>Presentation by GM & LT</p>  <p>Cyflwyniad Corporate Governance</p> <p>GM emphasized that Governing Bodies have responsibility for a Strategic role and the Head has responsibility for operational role.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DJ queried as Academy schools were becoming more popular how this would affect Governing Bodies. LT responded that in this area Federation schools were more the way forward and they have Governing Bodies e.g. Bryngwyn & Glanymor share 1 Governing Body. 	

	<p>2. CM queried if Governing Bodies would be held ultimately responsible if anything was to go wrong in a school. LT advised that if the Governors could prove they had acted 'reasonably' then the LA would be ultimately responsible.</p> <p>PT advised that to inform clarity on the role of Head Teachers and Governors for issues such as DBS / Sickness absence a series of 'road shows' had been held for Head Teachers and Governors. LT advised feedback from schools very positive. LT advised that, on occasions, issues in relation to DBS were a result of Head Teachers 'not talking' to Governing Body.</p> <p>3. CM asked PT where the Authority was now with regard to the schools DBS issue. PT advised issues had been addressed and going forward work was on-going with the Director of Communities with his safeguarding role. PT advised that Authority has a 'zero tolerance' approach to lack of DBS and that there was now no excuse with the faster on-line DBS system. DJ conveyed that, in his role as a Governor, he wasn't aware of DBS issue. PT advised that processes had now changed and that for any schools found not complying with DBS requirements all members of the Governing Body would be written to and not just the Chair.</p> <p>4. DJ asked if there was a maximum length of term for a Governing Body Chair. GM advised that there is nothing in legislation.</p> <p>5. LRJ queried if the Authority had awareness of how/what schools procure. GM advised that schools were free to go outside of the LA to procure but that they were always told to contact Corporate Procurement.</p> <p>CM summed up that the key thing is for Governing Bodies to consider 'Risk' and voiced concern as to when is the Governing Body accountable and when is the LA.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting / Matters Arising The Minutes of the last Meeting held on 1st May 2015 were approved as correct by PT.</p> <p>Matters arising / outstanding from previous minutes: WAO Safeguarding report – Action: 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>LRJ advised not addressed as yet and requested a copy of the</p>	<p>PS / LRJ</p>

	<p>Terms of Reference for Grants Panel.</p> <p>Action outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OB to forward Grants Panel TOR to LRJ <p>Items 3-6 from previous minutes all on Agenda.</p>	OB
4	<p>Code of Corporate Governance & Corporate Governance Group TOR</p> <p>CM advised that the number of 'Groups' in the Authority were to be reduced. Possibility that Whistle Blowing Group be merged with Corporate Governance Group. LRJ confirmed no issues as both Groups had representatives from the same Departments on them but that the Chair of Standards Committee should be invited to join a merged Group. CM put forward that the TOR would not be reviewed now and should be brought back to Group at next meeting as a 'merged' TOR. Lead to be PS.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PS to produce a merged Corporate Governance / Whistle blowing TOR by next meeting. 	PS
5	<p>WLGA Report Actions Update</p> <p>Report to be presented to Council 9/9/15 detailing amendments to the Constitution and Standing Orders. Constitution Working Group to review how amendments are working.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep item on Agenda as an update action 	LRJ
6	<p>Corporate Assessment Update</p> <p>ND talked through the Report; advised that a considerable amount of work had already been undertaken and that very positive feedback had already been received from WAO. For example in relation to the HR review and that continuous improvement / vision could be evidenced. Corporate Assessment Report expected December 2015. ND advised that the Authority will receive a WAO Annual report and a separate Corporate Assessment report. PP wanted it acknowledged that it was very pleasing for such positive verbal feedback from WAO and to pass on the Groups thanks to ND and his team for all the work undertaken.</p> <p>No questions from the Group.</p>	

	<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from ND at next meeting 	ND
7	<p>WAO Further Assurance – Carmarthenshire CC Response</p> <p>OB author of responses to WAO's letters '<i>Audit Enquiries to those charged with Governance and management</i>' on documents. OB stated that the questions asked are very detailed and it should be ensured Audit Committee Members are happy with the responses. To be approved by Audit Committee Sep 2015.</p> <p>No issues from this Group re. the responses.</p>	
8	<p>AGS – Internal Audit Review</p> <p>The Action Plan to the 2014/15 Internal Audit AGS report was reviewed. CS stated report was still in 'draft' format and could be subject to change. PT queried action 2.1. To discuss with HP.</p> <p>The 2014-15 AGS was discussed. CM stated that the main area to monitor was Appendix 2.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PS to bring the final Internal Audit AGS report back to the next meeting with a completed action plan. PT to discuss issue 2.1 with HP Ongoing monitoring of 2014-15 AGS Appendix 2 	<p>PS</p> <p>PT / HP</p> <p>All</p>
7	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>PP & DJ requested in future for all Agenda attachments be numbered and received more timely. CM agreed and proposed that moderngov.com be utilised.</p> <p>No other issues Meeting closed @ 12:00pm</p>	CM
	<p><i>Date of next meeting:</i></p> <p>3rd December 2015 All Meetings in the Democratic Services Committee Room, County Hall</p>	