

Corporate Governance Group

Terms of Reference

The main purpose of the Corporate Governance Group is to support the Audit Committee in the discharging of its governance responsibilities.

The CGG is to promote, monitor, review and improve key elements of the structures and processes that comprise the authority's governance arrangements as summarised below.

This includes the development of the Annual Governance Statement, monitoring the status of any significant governance issues arising from previous AGS and the assessment of the current Local Code of Governance effectiveness.

The CGG should review how the authority is:

1. Developing codes of conduct which define standards of behaviour for members and staff, and policies dealing with whistleblowing and conflicts of interest and that these codes and policies are communicated effectively.
2. Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.
3. Documenting a commitment to openness and acting in the public interest.
4. Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation.
5. Developing and communicating a vision which specifies intended outcomes for citizens and service users and is used as a basis for planning.
6. Translating the vision into courses of action for the authority, its partnerships and collaborations.
7. Reviewing the effectiveness of the decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, decision-making in partnerships, information provided to decision makers and robustness of data quality.
8. Measuring the performance of services and related projects and ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with defined outcomes and that they represent the best use of resources and value for money.
9. Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of members and management, with clear protocols for effective communication in respect of the authority and partnership arrangements.
10. Ensuring that financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact.
11. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the monitoring officer function.
12. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the head of paid service function.
13. Providing induction and identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training.
14. Reviewing the effectiveness of the framework for identifying and managing risks and for performance and demonstrating clear accountability.

15. Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained in accordance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption.
16. Ensuring an effective scrutiny function is in place.
17. Ensuring that assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact.
18. Ensuring an effective audit committee, as identified in CIPFA Audit Committees guidance.
19. Ensuring that the authority provides timely support, information and responses to external auditors and properly considers audit findings and recommendations.
20. Ensuring that the authority provides timely support, information and responses to external regulators and ombudsman and properly considers their findings and recommendations.
21. Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working and ensuring that they are reflected across the authority's overall governance structures.

Membership

This is to be statutory officer led group and should include other officers as necessary to fulfil the purpose as set out above. This should include:

- Lead Officer for Internal Audit
- Lead officer for Finance
- Lead Officer for Risk Management
- Lead Officer for Change management / project management
- Lead Officer for Performance management
- Lead Officer(s) for Ombudsman and other regulatory works
- Representative for External Audit
- Lead Officer for Counter fraud and whistle-blowing
- Lead Officer for Audit Committee
- (Temporarily) Lead Officer for Statutory recommendation progress this can be updated to be the Lead officer on the implementation of actions arising from the AGS Significant

Frequency of meetings

The meetings should be scheduled to align with the reporting to Audit Committee on the above purposes and to enable the Audit Committee to discharge its governance responsibilities.