

**REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2008, the Panel undertook a review of its own effectiveness, with the aim of identifying any opportunities for enhancing its effectiveness. The Panel identified a number of areas where changes might be beneficial and asked officers to prepare an action plan commenting on them and suggesting appropriate actions.
- 1.2 At the September 2008 Panel meeting the outcomes of the review were discussed and an action plan agreed. This reports updates the Panel on progress made to deliver that plan.

2. PROGRESS TO DATA

- 2.1 Annex A details the agreed actions and the current position. With the exception of one area, the remainder of the plan has been actioned. Officers will continue to monitor the delivery of the plan.

3. FUTURE REVIEWS

- 3.1 The Panel considered the 2008 review to be very thorough and felt that an annual review of effectiveness was not necessary. It was agreed that a further review be conducted prior to the 2011 governance statement being agreed.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Panel note the action taken to address the 2008 action plan.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Self assessment review papers

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**Effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Panel
Action Plan**

Annex A

Ref	Area Considered	Agreed Action	Implementation Date	Current Position
Terms of Reference				
2	Do the terms of reference follow the CIPFA model?	It is proposed that this is considered by the Council Structure Working Group (CSWG) that was established by Cabinet on 4 September.	Dependant on Working Group report and proposals.	Amendments to the Panel's terms of reference agreed by Council in April 2009 following CSWG report.
6	Do you feel that the all Members' of the Council are aware of the Panel, the work that it does and the importance of good governance?	The Chairman of the Panel to outline the work that is undertaken by the Panel, on behalf of all Members, when he introduces the report to Council that includes reference to the Annual Corporate Governance Statement.	December 2008	Overlooked in 2008. Planned for 2009.
Risk Management				
10	How does the Panel satisfy itself that the risk management ethos is being embedded into all areas of the Council?	The Audit and Risk Manager, in conjunction with the Head of Administration, to ask all Members if they require risk management training, and depending on need, hold short training sessions that explain the Council's approach to managing risk.	Request to Members October 2008 Training by January 2009	Training to 8 Members provided in December 2008. Revised risk management booklet on Members intranet pages.
Corporate Governance Statement				
13	Have issues that are being raised in the statement been considered by the Panel prior to the statement being presented to them?	Subject to discussion at the meeting.	-----	See item 14 below.
14	How could Officers' improve the information that the Panel receive regarding the review of the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements?	The Chairman of the Panel will be invited to attend the meetings that are held to prepare the statement.	For September 2009 statement	The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel together with the Executive Councillor for Finance were invited to attend a meeting in early September that discussed the process followed and issues to be raised in the statement.

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External Audit & Inspection Process				
32	Are reports on the work of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • external audit • and other inspection agencies presented to the Panel? 	All Heads of Service to report to the Panel on any external inspection report that makes comment on the Council's internal control or governance.	Ongoing	All external audits are reported to the Panel. No other inspection or similar reports have been received that deal with internal control or governance.
Financial Management is Adequate & Effective				
45	Does the Panel have a mechanism to keep it aware of topical legal and regulatory issues (e.g. through circulars and training)?	All Heads of Service to ensure that the Head of Democratic and Central Services is advised of any relevant items so that they can be added to the Panel's agenda and/or result in training sessions.	Ongoing	Significant items are included on the agenda. In the last year these include the BSI whistleblowing Code of Practice; CIPFA guidance on the review of the system of internal audit.
Fraud Awareness				
50	Is the Panel aware of the work being done to counter fraud and assured that sufficient resources are available?	A report from the Head of Customer Services shall be presented to the Panel, prior to the adoption of the annual governance statement, summarising the work that is being done to counter fraud.	September 2008	Reports on work to counter fraud presented to Panel in September 2008 & 2009.
Membership of the Panel				
53	Has the membership of the Panel been formally agreed and a quorum set?	It is proposed that this be referred to the Council Structure Working Group (CSWG) that was established by Cabinet on 4 September.	Dependant on Working Group report and proposals.	Amendments to the Panel's membership agreed by Council in April 2009 following CSWG report.

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56	Have all members' skills and experiences been assessed and training given for identified gaps?	Following the review of the Panel's terms of reference, Panel members are to consider any gaps in their knowledge and inform the Head of Administration so that training can be arranged. This exercise should be conducted annually.	3 months after the review of the Panel's terms of reference and annually thereafter.	Superseded by review of the Council's democratic structure by Member-led cross party working party with recommendations approved by Council in April 2009. Signing of the IDeA Member Development Charter and appointment of a Member Development Officer has resulted in an action plan to achieve charter status that will enhance Member skills and performance. Role descriptions have been developed for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel.
Meetings				
68	Is the Panel satisfied that officers are acting on and monitoring actions taken to implement agreed actions, whether from internal, external or other reporting bodies?	<p>If the target for agreed audit actions is not achieved, COMT be asked to propose further steps to achieve the target.</p> <p>Agreed actions are to be monitored by the Policy and Strategic Services Manager and reported to the Panel.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Internal audit target achieved.</p> <p>Actions identified and agreed from external audits are incorporated into the Council Improvement Plan. The Plan is reported to Cabinet quarterly and to the Panel half yearly.</p>