

HARROW COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2009

Reference from the Standards Committee meeting held on 4 December 2008: Code of Corporate Governance

1. At its meeting on 4 December 2008, the Standards Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Finance, which sought the Committee's agreement to the inclusion in the Constitution of a Code of Corporate Governance for Harrow Council, which had already been approved by the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee on 1 September 2008.
2. It was noted that different parts of the Code fell within the remit of various bodies, including the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee, the Standards Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but that responsibility for the different parts of the Code was not specified. The way in which the Code would be implemented was queried. The meeting was advised that implementation was via the management assurance process which was already in place, and which sought evidence from managers that appropriate governance procedures were in use. This fed into the annual governance statement which was signed off and included as part of the Authority's statement of accounts. Members expressed concern that procedures for which the Committee was accountable were being signed off without it having been part of the review process. It was felt that further consideration should be given to the way in which the Code was implemented.
3. The process for adoption of the Code was also queried, and the Committee was of the view that consideration should be given to consultation with other relevant parties, such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chairman of the Constitution Review Working Group, prior to its submission to Council.
4. There was some discussion as to whether, in light of the increasing emphasis on partnership working, the principle set out in paragraph 2.5, "Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective", should be extended to include the development of capacity and capability in the voluntary sector. It was noted, however, that the Code was for the use of Council Members and officers, and that provisions relating to partnership working were set out under paragraph 2.2. It was agreed that this issue also be referred to the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration. In addition, a correction to the heading of paragraph 2.4 to read "Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and the management of risk" was suggested in order to make it read better.
5. The Committee **RESOLVED**: To (1) agree to the inclusion of the Code of Corporate Governance in the Council's Constitution; and

(2) refer the comments of the Committee, as set out above, to the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Papers: No unpublished documents.

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