

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 14 August 2013

LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Issue for Decision

To consider and approve an amended Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Decision Made

1. That the Local Code of Corporate Governance, as set out at Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive, be agreed.
2. That the Local Code of Corporate Governance be amended, at the appropriate time, to reflect any decision with regard to changes to the Locality Board.

Reasons for Decision

The principles and standards of good governance in local government have been considered and debated on various occasions since the early 1990's. Various guides and publications on governance frameworks have been released and in 2003 the Council adopted a local code of corporate governance. This code is regularly reviewed and amendments are reported for approval to the Cabinet along with the views of the Audit Committee as part of its role in governance and risk.

Confidence in public sector governance is of critical importance, given the huge investments by government and council taxpayers in local services and the Council has recognised the importance of the core principles as set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" published in 2007. The core principles are:

1. focus on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community in creating and implementing the vision for the local area;
2. members and officers will work together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
3. promote values for the Authority and demonstrate the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;

4. take informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and manage risk;
5. develop the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
6. engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Since 2004 an officer working group has reviewed and monitored corporate governance issues at an operational level. This group has existed in various guises and with differing levels of officer representation. The current group includes all members of the Corporate Leadership Team, the Head of Audit Partnership, the Head of Policy and Communications and the Head of Finance and Resources.

During 2012/13 the working group has considered the framework in operation and agreed minor amendments which have been reflected in the Local Code of Corporate Governance attached as Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance was reported to Audit Committee on 12 August 2013. The Head of Finance and Resources informed the Cabinet that the Audit Committee recommended it for acceptance and that in future, in order to give clarity to the changes within the document, the changes are shown by track changes.

Officers were asked to ensure that the Code is amended once a decision is made regarding possible changes to the Locality Board.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

Consideration of the Local Code of Corporate Governance on an annual basis to ensure it is updated and an effective code is considered best practice. In the past the code has not been reviewed every year and Cabinet could consider not to do so. This approach is not recommended and the officer working group has already agreed to make the review a rolling review in operational terms and to ensure that any changes are reported to Audit Committee and Cabinet on an annual basis.

Background Papers

None

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 23 August 2013
