

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee meeting of 22 November 2022

340. Review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance

The Committee considered a report requesting it to review the Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2022/23. The Local Code of Corporate Governance was how the Council demonstrated that its structures comply with the recognised principles of good governance.

Hayley McGrath, Corporate Governance Manager, attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Committee in its deliberations. Colchester Borough Council (the Council) had adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance which ensured that its activities were carried out in an open and fair manner, and in accordance with the six core principles set out in guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), which were:

- Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- Councillors and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

The Code set out what actions had been taken to comply with the six principles, and these actions had been reviewed by senior Officers to ensure that they remained relevant to the current work of the Council. The Local Code had been updated to reflect the delivery of the strategic plan 2020-23 and Cabinet's vision and priorities, along with details of the peer challenge, the People Strategy, apprenticeship programme for staff, the creation of a central site for council data and provision of cost of living resources. Details of the newly created staff engagement group, 'Speak up Now', were also provided. Otherwise, there had been no significant changes to the Local Code following the review, and it was considered still fit for purpose.

A Committee member welcomed the Code, and considered that personal development plans for Councillors should be referenced in it. The Committee was advised that work in relation to the development of personal development plans for Councillors was ongoing with the Member Development Group, and it was anticipated that a formal structure for administering these would be in place soon. The Committee considered that personal development for all staff and Councillors was of key importance.

RESOLVED that:-

- the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance for 2022/23 had been reviewed,
- it be recommended to Full Council that the Local Code of Corporate Governance be approved for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.