

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

DATE: 14 September 2021

SUBJECT: Draft Policy Statement on Corporate Governance

CHIEF OFFICER: Josie Wragg

CONTACT OFFICER: Sarah Wilson, Deputy Monitoring Officer

WARD(S): All

EXEMPT: NO

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 – Draft Policy Statement on Corporate Governance

1 Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report requests that the Committee review the draft Policy Statement on Corporate Governance to recommend the same to Full Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

- Recommend to Full Council approval of the Policy Statement on Corporate Government to replace the existing Statement at Part 5.9 of the Constitution.

Reason: Corporate governance is key to ensuring effective decision-making so that local communities can place trust in the way the Council undertakes and carries out its duties. The existing Policy Statement has not been reviewed for some time and does not reflect the principles set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE framework.

2 Report

Introductory paragraph

2.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the rules, procedures and codes of practice governing the Council's operations. Part 5 contains the Ethical Framework and includes a Policy Statement on Corporate Governance at Part 5.9. This Statement has not been subject to a detailed review process in the last few years. Following the Council's request for a capitalisation directive, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) commissioned a review into the Council's financial position and the strength of its wider governance arrangements. Whilst the results of this review have not yet been published, the Council has been reviewing its governance processes to ensure they meet industry standards.

Options considered

2.2 The Council could choose not to amend its Policy Statement on Corporate Governance. This is not recommended as the current Statement is not based on the CIPFA / SOLACE framework.

Background

2.3 In 2016, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) published a framework and guidance notes entitled “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government” (the CIPFA / SOLACE framework). The framework defines governance as “the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.”

2.4 The framework contains two central principles, with five supporting principles. These seven core principles each have a number of supporting principles. The draft Policy Statement on Core Governance has set out these core principles and sub-principles, with a list of evidence to demonstrate that the Council is meeting each principle.

2.5 By having a publicly available Policy Statement on Corporate Governance and using this as a basis for the Annual Governance statement reported to this Committee each year, the Council is committing to regularly reviewing its procedures, analysing its performance and recommending improvements and doing this in an open and transparent manner. This will help demonstrate the Council’s commitment to achieving excellence in the provision of services for the people of Slough and its recognition of the importance of effective corporate governance to allow the communities of Slough to place trust in the way that the Council undertakes and carries out its duties.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 There are no financial implications of this recommendation.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 Changes to the Council’s Constitution are reserved to Full Council. The draft Statement is being reviewed by the member working panel and any feedback from this panel will be provided to this Committee for it to consider whether any changes should be made to the draft prior to submission to Full Council.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 Regularly reviewing the systems in place to achieve effective corporate governance is part of an effective risk management procedure.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 There are no environmental implications of this recommendation.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 The draft Statement contains details on how the Council ensures it engages with its citizens and service users effectively, including encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds.

4. Background Papers

None