



Audit & Governance Committee
16 February 2015

Statutory Responsibilities Network

Purpose of the report:

The Audit & Governance Committee Effectiveness Review recommended that the committee develops a protocol for working with the newly established Statutory Responsibilities Network.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- i. The committee supports the proposed protocol for working with the Statutory Responsibilities Network.
- ii. The Audit & Governance Committee Chairman has regular meetings with the Network chairman, the Chief Executive, in order to go through minutes and keep up-to-date with network activity.

Introduction:

1. During the course of Audit & Governance Committee Effectiveness Review, the task group was given information about the establishment of a Statutory Responsibilities Network for the Council. The task group felt that it would be necessary for the committee to understand how to use or work with the Statutory Responsibilities Network on aspects of its work. It recommended that the committee develops a protocol for working with the newly established Statutory Responsibilities Network. This report provides information on the work of the Network, specifically addressing queries raised during the Effectiveness Review, and outlines a proposed protocol for working with the committee.

What is the Statutory Responsibilities Network?

2. The Statutory Responsibilities Network (SRN) has been established since May 2014 and meets every fortnight on a Monday afternoon. It exists to bring key officers together with a focus on the Council's core legal duties.

Terms of reference

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3. The purpose of SRN is to facilitate clear senior officer oversight of our major statutory and other responsibilities, which have been defined as:
 - Ensuring adults and children are safe
 - Ensuring fiduciary duty, i.e. finances are safe
 - Ensuring compliance, including with equalities duties
 - Ensuring health & safety responsibilities are met
 - Ensuring highways responsibilities are met
 - Ensuring the provision of sufficient school places
 - Ensuring public health & wellbeing
 - Ensuring organisational resilience and continuity
 - Ensuring risks are identified and managed

Membership

4. SRN membership, as of February 2015:
 - David McNulty, Chief Executive Officer
 - Nick Wilson, Strategic Director Children, Schools and Families
 - Dave Sargeant, Strategic Director Adult Social Care
 - Russell Pearson, Chief Fire Officer
 - Helen Atkinson, Director of Public Health
 - Sheila Little, Director of Finance
 - Ann Charlton, Director of Legal & Democratic Services
 - Carmel Millar, Director of People and Development
 - Sue Lewry Jones, Chief Internal Auditor

Production of Annual Governance Statement

5. SRN will steer the production of the Annual Governance Statement. The Director of Finance will share a draft with SRN April 2015.

Typical network activity

6. The network provides a regular forum for statutory officers to raise key issues, share knowledge and offer challenge. In response to risks, the network may choose to request further information, propose ideas or commission specific work. Recent items include pay exceptions, health and safety and DBS checks. Where organisational inconsistencies are identified, a strategic solution is agreed, implemented and overseen.

Involvement with assurance mapping

7. The Chief Internal Auditor will periodically bring the Council's assurance map to the attention of SRN, for their oversight and feedback.

Governance of risk

- 8. The leadership risk register is a standing item for SRN meetings. This allows for the regular review of existing risks and the identification of new risks. The Strategic Risk Forum also continues to operate as usual.

Proposed Protocol:

- 9. Performance of SRN will be managed by the Chief Executive Officer, who will provide the Committee with twice yearly reports on progress. Key findings throughout the year will continue to be brought to the Committee by SRN members.
- 10. It is suggested that the Audit & Governance Committee Chairman goes through the minutes of SRN meetings and be briefed on other activity of the network during his regular meetings with the Chief Executive.

Conclusions:

- 11. The purpose of SRN is to bring together people with statutory responsibilities and to provide the strategic connectivity. It is designed to enhance the focus on core duties. With this protocol, the SRN will be joined up with the Audit & Governance Committee, with measures in place to ensure the effective governance of risk.

Financial and value for money implications

- 12. None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 13. EIA not completed as this report is for information.

Risk Management Implications

- 14. The Statutory Responsibility Network plays a key role in the identification and management of risk.

Next steps:

Director of Finance to share draft Annual Governance Statement with SRN.

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