



Audit & Governance Committee
22 February 2016

Statutory Responsibilities Network

Purpose of the report:

To update the Audit & Governance Committee on activity of the Statutory Responsibilities Network.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- i. The Audit & Governance Committee Chairman continues to meet with the Network chairman, the Chief Executive, in order to keep up-to-date with network activity.

Introduction:

- ii. As a result of the Audit & Governance Committee Effectiveness Review, the Committee agreed a protocol for working with the Statutory Responsibilities Network. This report constitutes part of the agreed protocol and provides an update on the activity of the Statutory Responsibilities Network since the last report in September 2015.

What is the Statutory Responsibilities Network?

1. 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

2. 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

3. SRN membership, as of January 2016:

- David McNulty, Chief Executive Officer
- Julie Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director, Children, Schools and Families
- Russell Pearson, Chief Fire Officer
- Helen Atkinson, Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health
- Sheila Little, Director of Finance
- Ann Charlton, Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services
- Ken Akers, Strategic Human Resources Relationship Manager
- Sue Lewry-Jones, Chief Internal Auditor
- Yvonne Rees, Strategic Director for Customers and Communities

4. 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. Where organisational inconsistencies are identified, a strategic solution is agreed, implemented and overseen.

<h3>Summary of Network Activity Over the Past Six Months</h3>
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5. Key items over the past six months include:

Improvement of Children's Services

6. The Children's Improvement Plan is a standing item for SRN meetings, allowing for constructive challenge and strategic oversight of the plan.

Governance of risk, primarily financial risk

7. 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 financial outlook features as the number one risk for the organisation and the Director of Finance keeps the SRN updated on the strategic financial position of the Council. The Strategic Risk Forum also continues to operate as usual.

8. Other items over the past six months:

- Oversight of Syrian refugee crisis management.

- 'Prevent' agenda, including agreement of protocols for managing terrorism risk.
- Health and safety areas for development (ROSPA report).
- New duties for local government, and the implications of these on the organisation.
- Data breaches and learning points, including strategies to mitigate future risks.
- HR matters including health and safety scorecard.

Protocol arrangements:

9. Performance of SRN will be managed by the Chief Executive Officer, who will continue to 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.

Conclusions:

10. The agreed protocol continues to ensure SRN is joined up with the Audit & Governance Committee, with measures in place to ensure the effective governance of risk.

Financial and value for money implications

11. None

Equalities and Diversity Implications

12. EIA not completed as this report is for information.

Risk Management Implications

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

Next steps:

A further update report will be submitted to the Committee in September 2016.

Report contact: Ellie Giffard, Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer.

Contact details: 020 8213 2502, ellie.giffard@surreycc.gov.uk

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