

Accounts Commission Report  
Safeguarding public money: are you getting it right?  
Extracts from Checklists with council responses

(a) Councillors' continuing professional development

| QUESTION   | YES/NO/<br>PARTLY | RESPONSE  |
|--|-------------------|---|
| After the last election, was the general induction programme for councillors successful? | Yes               | The programme was comprehensive ( the first hundred days) and feedback from elected members and officers was positive   |
| Do officers give you good support on knowledge topics (such as internal controls)?       | Yes               | Briefing sessions are provided on a range of issues; recent emphasis has been on service activity in the context of financial planning.   |
| Do officers give you good support on personal skills (such as chairing meetings)?        | Yes               | Training has been provided on chairing meetings also on conduct at different types of meetings e.g. appeals committee meetings  |
| Do you fully understand your roles at council, committee and ward levels?                | Yes               | This was covered as part of the induction using Improvement Service workbooks.  |
| Have you made good use of the Improvement Service's support and publications?            | Yes               | As above also Improvement Service have hosted workshops for the Admin. Group, and elected members generally e.g. on best value inspections. Its guidance on scrutiny has also been consulted. |
| Do you have a personalised CPD programme?  | Partly            | This is an area for development. The need for programme is included in a draft elected member strategy but needs further work.  |
| Do you actively participate in, and benefit from, the support made available to you?     | Partly            | Participation is for elected members to determine but feedback when sought is generally positive.   |

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| Do officers monitor and understand councillors' take up of training and development?     | Yes  | Statistics are collated and reported to the Corporate Management Team.  |
| Where you do not engage fully in training and development, how could officers help more? | ---- | Members have not been formally surveyed on this to identify formal training needs; however, officers accommodate requests for briefing sessions on topics as requested.   |
| Does CPD for councillors help you to be effective in your governance and scrutiny roles? | Yes  | CPD is recognised as important by councillors to assist them effectively discharge their duties as an elected member at a time of significant change in local government. |

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#### (b) Statutory Officers and Chief Education Officer

| QUESTION   | YES/NO/<br>PARTLY   | RESPONSE   |
|--|---|--|
| Are the roles of these officers clearly set out in the council's governance documents?   | Partly  | A recent management restructuring exercise means that the scheme of delegation requires updating. This is being taken forward by the Monitoring Officer.   |
| Do these Officers sit on the corporate management team or have access to it?             | Partly  | The CMT comprises the Chief Executive; two Depute Chief Executives; and the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care. Other statutory officers are employed at second tier (Head of Service level) and have ready access to CMT. The Chief Financial Officer attends CMT monthly to present and participate in financial monitoring.  |
| Are these officers sufficiently resourced to discharge their roles and responsibilities? | Yes ,<br>subject to<br>commentary<br>given as<br>response | The management restructure sought to make best use of available resources. This altered the workloads/ portfolios of the statutory officers and ongoing financial and other pressures may impact on how these duties are discharged going forward. This will be monitored in terms of sustainability noting that the changes made were in part driven by the need to make financial savings. |
| Do these officers have the influence needed to ensure the council operates effectively?  | Yes   | All statutory officers contribute to CMT/SMT which meets regularly. These meetings consider a wide range of corporate/strategic issues that influence the way forward for the council.   |

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| Do councillors and committees understand how and when to consult these officers?                     | Yes                                       | Statutory officers are confident that elected members understand their roles (see also councillors' CPD).  |
| Do these officers give helpful, timely, impartial support to councillors and other officers?         | Yes                                       |  |
| Do these officers have a constructive relationship with the senior management team?                  | Yes                                       | Statutory officers are an integral part of the Senior Management Team  |
| Do you have confidence in your council's key officers?   |   | This strictly would be for members to comment upon however there is good engagement between elected members and officers and working relationships which indicates a confidence in the work of senior officers |
| Is there sufficient timely training and ongoing support for officers and councillors, including you? | See separate schedule on Councillors' CPD |  |