

Corporate Policy Committee – August 2024 Responses to questions raised by Committee Members

Question:

Councillor M Beanland, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, addressed the committee as a visiting member in relation to item 6 (Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan). Cllr Beanland welcomed the scrutiny undertaken through the Peer Challenge and Transformation Plan in relation to the council's key corporate processes and systems, including risk management. Cllr Beanland referred to the latest RAG ratings presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for the strategic risks relating to carbon neutrality and the protection of children and queried how these two risks could be allocated the same level risk score. Cllr Beanland stated that, in light of the recent Ofsted and ILACS inspection judgements, that an overhaul of risk policy was needed to ensure that the council worked to preserve residents services as a priority. Cllr Beanland asked the committee to consider producing a more efficient risk management policy as soon as possible. The Chair offered to provide a written response.

Response:

Clarification has been provided by Cllr Beanland that by "risk policy" he was referring to the quarterly update reports provided to the Corporate Policy Committee on the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

The Council's Strategic Risk Register captures risks which materially threaten the organisation's strategic goals and objectives, as described in our Corporate Plan. Whilst the scoring of the risk uses a prescribed methodology to bring a level of consistency, the scope of individual risks does not always lend itself to easy comparison, and the net score of a risk at 16, at its simplest, means that both risks have been rated as having a high impact and a high likelihood of occurring, not necessarily that one risk is more important than the other, but to open the conversation on how limited resources can then be used to manage and mitigate those risks.

Each of the strategic risks also includes a target score; this should be used to indicate the level of risk which is acceptable for the organisation to be carrying in relation to that individual risk; as part of future reports on risk, we will seek to provide a clearer narrative which emphasises this, the measures required to achieve that, the resources which would be involved, and how this fits within the organisation's overall risk tolerance/risk appetite.

Question:

Membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board was raised. It was confirmed that advice had been provided and that the membership of this body did not need to change following the change in Leadership, however clarification would be sought, and a response sent to the committee.

Response:

Statutory guidance states that: Core statutory membership **The 2012 Act prescribes a core statutory membership of at least one elected representative, nominated by either the Leader of the council, the Mayor, or in some cases by the local authority**, a representative from each CCG whose area falls within or coincides with, the local authority area, the local authority directors of adult social services, children's services, and public health and a representative from the local Healthwatch organisation. It is for the Leader, Mayor, or in some cases the local authority itself, to determine the precise number of elected representatives on the board, and the relevant person would be free to decide upon nominating a majority of elected members. They also may wish to take into consideration the balance of political groups within the council. To reduce the burden of every CCG in a local authority area being required to appoint its own representative, two or more CCGs may be represented by the same person on the health and wellbeing board to another, where this has the explicit agreement of the board. The Local Healthwatch organisation for that area is required to appoint one person to represent it.

The terms of reference set out in the Constitution state that membership should be: 'Three councillors from Cheshire East Council*1 (representing the Administration)' (does not state they have to be members of service committees).

Therefore, there is no strict requirement for the Corporate Policy Committee to re-appoint another member to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Appointments will be considered again in June 2025 when the committee will be asked to agree its 25-26 representative. It is a matter for the Health and Wellbeing to appoint a Chair.

Question:

Cllr O'Leary referred to his request at the last meeting in relation to a paper on horizon scanning identifying key policy changes being introduced by the new government. Cllr O'Leary requested an update on this matter and how this work would be scheduled into the Work Programme. It was highlighted that a brief update had been included in a recent member briefing however further analysis would be undertaken and a report added to the work programme. It was agreed that service specific issues would be scheduled for the relevant service committee.

Response:

Officers are in the process of mapping the key legislation and policy changes, looking at prioritisation and process to gain some clarity on what is required to report back to Members. An update report on the impact for Cheshire East will come back

to Corporate Policy Committee in November 2024 and any specific issues reported to the relevant service committee as appropriate.