

SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 25 March 2010, at County Hall, Lewes.

Present:

Mr A Price, JP (Chairman), Prof G Bull, Mr P Evans, Mrs C Shaves MBE JP, Mr A Smith and Mr S Waight.

In Attendance:

Mr M Baker, Director of Finance, Sussex Police
Mrs K Coakes, Press and Public Relations Officer, Sussex Police Authority
Mr J Eagles, Deputy Treasurer, Sussex Police Authority
Dr J Godfrey, Chief Executive, Sussex Police Authority
Mr G Jones, Chief Internal Auditor, Sussex Police Authority
Mrs D Hill, Policy Officer, Sussex Police Authority
Mr P Hollister, Head of IT, Sussex Police
Mrs L Manley, Risk Manager, Sussex Police
Mr M Rowe, Head of Finance, Sussex Police

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

59. Apologies for absence were received from Mr L Barnard and Mrs S Knight.

URGENT MATTERS

60. No urgent matters were raised

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTEREST

61. No disclosures of personal interest were made.

MINUTES

62. **Resolved** – that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

REPORTS

63. Copies of the reports referred to in the minutes below are included in the Minute Book.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT GROUP

64. The Committee received an update on the Police Authority Inspection process which had taken place over the past week (15-19 March 2010).
65. It was reported that members and officers from the Authority, officers from the Force and other partners had all been involved in the inspection process. The draft Inspection Report was anticipated to be released on 27 April 2010 for comment with the formal publication taking place on 17 June 2010. The Chief Executive thanked everyone for the considerable effort and work that had gone into the inspection process.
66. **Resolved** – that the oral report be noted.

DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN – PROGRESS 2010 -11

67. The Committee received the Internal Audit Plan for 2010-11 which provided details of the nature, level, service delivery and resource allocation in relation to internal audit work to be provided to the Force during the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.
68. Prior to the meeting, the Committee had received a training seminar on internal audit processes. The purpose of the training was to increase members understanding of the internal audit function to enable them to be proactive in the formation of the Annual Internal Audit Plan and to challenge reports and outcomes. The Chairman thanked the Chief Internal Auditor for the insight into the internal audit processes.
69. It was reported that, as part of the Section 23 collaborative policing arrangement with other regional authorities, Sussex Police had taken the lead role in respect of the newly formed Regional Asset Recovery Team. Internal Audit had been requested to review the governance arrangements once the initiative had become established. The Committee requested that Internal Audit reviewed the governance arrangements in the three Section 23 agreements for witness protection, covert operations and technical support recently entered into by the Authority.
70. **Resolved** – that
 - (1) Internal Audit be requested to review the governance arrangements in the three Section 23 agreements for witness protection, covert operations and technical support recently entered into by the Authority; and
 - (2) the Internal Audit Plan for 2010-11 be approved.

INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW OF DATA HANDLING UPDATE

71. The Committee received an update report on the Internal Audit Review of Data Handling.

72. At the previous meeting of the Committee, members considered the Interim Annual Internal Audit Report which had summarised the results of the internal audit work undertaken during the first half of the year (2009-10) which included the completed audit review of data handling. At that time, Internal Audit was only able to give limited assurance as to the effectiveness of the control environment.
73. The Committee noted that satisfactory progress had been made since the previous report. At the time of the meeting, seven of the 14 recommendations in the report had been fully implemented, six were being progressed within the agreed timescales and one recommendation, which related to screensavers, had been considered and rejected. The Committee queried the reason for the rejection of the recommendation and was reassured by the response given.
74. Internal Audit confirmed that the level of assurance given had been raised from limited to satisfactory.
75. The Lead Member for Information Systems, Professor G Bull, reported that he had been kept updated on the audit throughout and was satisfied with the recommendations and outcome achieved.
76. **Resolved** – that a further progress report setting out the status of any outstanding recommendations be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS UPDATE

77. The Committee received a progress report on the implementation of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). In addition, the report provided an overview of the impact of IFRS on the 2009-10 accounts and a general update on the CIPFA accounting standards changes.
78. It was reported that the Force was generally on target against its implementation plan and that key deadlines had been met. However, changes in staffing and later than planned receipt of valuation information had led to some tasks falling behind the schedule. The Committee considered the task plan which was attached to the report and noted that many of the targets marked in red would change with the receipt of the valuation information.
79. **Resolved** – that the progress with implementing the transition to accounting under International Financial Reporting Standards and the changes to the 2009 SORP (Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting) be received and noted.

DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

80. The Committee considered the progress being made in the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) as part of the arrangements

for ensuring that a framework of good governance has in place for the Authority and the Force.

81. The AGS outlined the assurance frameworks and processes that the Authority and Force had put in place and included elements as to how the governance considerations were set up and implemented in the Force and the Authority.
82. As agreed at the previous meeting of the Committee, held on 19 November 2009, an Annual Governance Statement Working Group (AGSWG) had been formed and had agreed the direction for the AGS formulation processes for 2009-10 which included the drafting of an updated Code of Corporate Governance.
83. It was agreed that the draft AGS would be circulated to all members of the Police Authority for comment by 30 April 2010.
84. **Resolved** – that the report be noted.

REVISED MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

85. The Committee received a report on the recent revisions to the Members' Handbook.
86. It was previously agreed by the Committee that there should be a periodic review of the contents of the Members' Handbook. The Members' Handbook, which had been designed to assist members in their work as a Member of the Authority, had been revised and published on an annual basis. It was reported that a comprehensive review of the Handbook had been undertaken for the provision of a guide to what the Authority does and how members could contribute most effectively to the work of the Authority on behalf of the people of Sussex. A hard copy of the Handbook would be produced for members, and a copy was available on the Authority's website (www.sussexpa.gov.uk/plans-and-policies/index.aspx).
87. **Resolved** – that the report be noted and the revision to the Members' Handbook be supported.

DRAFT CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

88. The Committee considered the Draft Code of Corporate Governance which was a requirement in preparation for the Annual Governance Statement.
89. The Code contained the principles of good governance and included arrangements for its ongoing application and effectiveness. The draft Code was considered and approved by the Committee, subject to a number of suggested amendments (revised copy is attached to the Minutes).

90. **Recommended** – that the draft Code of Corporate Governance, as amended, be approved by the Authority at its meeting on 15 April 2010.
91. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**
92. **Resolved** – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 14 (information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime).

ALAN PRICE
Chairman