

Annual Review of Corporate Governance 2017/18

Introduction

As a public body created under the Regulation of Scotland Act 2001, we aim to work to the highest standards of integrity in the public interest. Our code of governance ensures that we achieve this. The framework we operate in means that we:

- are focussed on outcomes
- work in clearly defined roles
- promote values for the whole organisation and demonstrate good governance through behaviour
- take informed and transparent decisions which are subject to scrutiny
- engage with stakeholders to make sure we are accountable.

A series of documents set out how we operate, for example:

- Scheme of Delegation
- SSSC Complaint Procedure
- Unacceptable actions policy
- Risk register
- Standing orders of the SSSC and its committees

It is important that we keep these documents under review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. One of the ways we do this is to carry out an annual review. This is a summary of the review carried out in 2017.

A self-assessment form was circulated to Council members in November 2017. The aim is to ask members for feedback on a number of performance indicators across a number of governance areas. From that members can consider any possible gaps or areas for improvement.

Five areas were considered:

- Integrity, commitment to values, and respecting the rule of law
- Openness and Stakeholder Engagement
- Strategic Intent
- Performance and Accountability
- Council Capacity and Capability.

Key Themes

None of the Council members who responded answered 'no' to any of the indicator questions. This suggests that there are no immediate areas of concern. However, some members answered 'not sure' to some indicators. Members provided comment to indicate that this may be because they did not know the information, or that there was scope for improvement.

The comments and themes for each indicator are summarised below. They are divided into possible areas for improvement, areas where information might be helpful and some notes on the wording of the indicator.

A. Integrity, commitment to values, and respecting the rule of law

Possible improvement	Increasing the awareness of whistleblowing as a means of identifying problems.
Information required	<p>What are the whistleblowing arrangements</p> <p>How are staff involvement in decision making</p> <p>How are staff made aware of how they can raise concerns</p> <p>How Council is monitoring complaint trends as a matter of business.</p>

B. Openness and Stakeholder Engagement

Possible improvement	<p>Improve engagement with service users and carers – there is still on-going work which is needed to meet this indicator.</p> <p>While Council members actively seek practical opportunities to engage with service users, carers and the workforce, they are unaware of each other's activities in this area as there is no need to report on this.</p>
Information required	n/a
Note	Lack of clarity about who local stakeholders are in the context of national policy.

C. Strategic Intent

Possible improvement	Greater certainty around longer term funding to address the risks associated with the current arrangements.
Information required	n/a
Note	Indicator C5: lack of clarity about what investment and disinvestment means.

D. Performance and Accountability

Possible improvement	Improved management of relationship with the sponsor Improved meeting schedule More information about staffing changes Greater clarity around decisions delegated to EMT.
Information required	n/a
Note	Indicator D3: lack of clarity about what is meant by 'executive' – does this mean EMT or sponsor.

E. Council Capacity and Capability.

Possible improvement	Consider the impact of Council members leaving at the same time. Improve representation on Council from a variety of groups for example, differing ethnic backgrounds.
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Areas for development

Members were asked to rank areas for development. The two areas identified as being most needed are:

1. Performance and Accountability

The Council assures itself and the public it serves that it will deliver its strategic outcome and vision and manages its risks effectively.

2. Capacity and Capability

The Council comprises motivated individuals who have the right blend of skills and experience to help deliver its strategic intent. Board members work constructively together in a climate characterized by informed trust, involvement and robust dialogue.