

Item 7 – Local Government Transparency Code 2014

The attached report was considered by the Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee, relevant minute extract below:

Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee – 2 December 2014 (Minute 33)

The Head of Transformation and Strategy presented a report which set out the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2014 which came into effect on 31 October 2014. These Regulations make it a legal requirement for local authorities to publish a range of data as specified in Part 2 of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

It was noted that, of the 13 data sets required under Part 2 of the Code, the Council currently publishes four to the required standard. Information has to be published in a format and under a licence that allows open re-use, including for commercial activities.

In addition, Part 3 of the Code sets out a further 7 data sets of enhanced information which it is recommended be published, but where there is no legal requirement to do so. Members generally considered that the additional information should be published if it was readily available, but that resources should not be put into non-statutory requirements. There was some concern expressed about the possible risk of fraud with the publication of more detailed financial information, and the possible additional effort needed to redact data as it was felt that more detailed information was likely to involve more personal details. There was also some concern that the Government could impose a further statutory requirement on the “suggested” additional data further down the line. There was also concern that there would be pressure to provide data in an easily analysed format which could require further resources.

The Head of Transformation and Strategy advised that there was still a big job to be done to get to the basic statutory level – particularly around the Local Authority Land and Procurement data sets.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 be noted; and
- b) Cabinet be advised that the Advisory Committee felt that, with resignation, the further data as recommended by the Code be published if it was readily available and if there were no adverse consequences foreseeable going forward.