

Audit Committee

Thursday, 18 January 2007

Present: Councillor John Wilson (Chair), Councillor Anthony Gee (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Geoffrey Russell and Mary Wilson

Officers Present: Donna Hall (Chief Executive), Gary Hall (Director of Finance), Garry Barclay (Audit and Risk Manager), Andy Armstrong (Assistant Audit Manager) and Dianne Scambler (Trainee Democratic Services Officer)

07.AU.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors M Cullens, K Iddon, S Smith and J Snape.

07.AU.02 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26 September 2007 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

07.AU.03 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared.

07.AU.04 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS MEMORANDUM

The Audit Commission submitted a Financial Statements Memorandum summarising the matters arising from the audit for the year ended 31 March 2006.

The Audit Commission, as the Council's external auditors, have a responsibility to form an independent view on the accounts and issue an opinion as to whether or not they present fairly the financial position of the Council. The quality of the Authority's financial statements had been high and following the amendment of some minor adjustments they had given the Authority an unqualified opinion.

Recommendations for any improvements that had been identified were already being implemented.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.AU.05 INTERIM REPORT ON INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES AS AT 29TH DECEMBER 2006

The Director of Finance submitted an interim report of the work undertaken in respect of the Annual Internal Audit Plan during the third quarter of 2006/07 and provided details on further reviews, investigations and other Internal Audit activities during the period.

An appendix to the report gave an assessment of the overall progress made and showed that the Audit Plan is firmly on course to be delivered.

The report highlighted the main reviews that the Internal Audit Service had undertaken since the last meeting as follows:

- Management of Partnerships and Partnering Contracts
- Business Continuity Management

- Project Management
- Freedom of Information
- Data Protection
- IT Security

Each of the audit reviews had been rated as either “adequate” or “limited” from an internal control viewpoint and confirmation was received that Directors had undertaken to implement all of the key recommendations.

The report also gave details of the Audit Services involvement in proactive support work.

They had helped to set up an interim board to identify the improvements that are necessary to meet the requirements of the new District Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime, Use of Resources assessment and the CIPFA SOLACE Corporate Governance Framework.

The Council’s position in Best Value Performance Indicators terms is very strong, with 72% of indicators now in the upper quartile. Audit Services had worked together with the Director of Policy and Performance to improve on data collection systems and had delivered 2 workshops that briefed officers of the standards required.

The service were also working with Housing Services to update their inventories of equipment to ensure that there will be a clear hand over and to avoid any potential issues regarding ownership or valuation at the point of transfer.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

07.AU.06 TRAINING PRESENTATION - PARTNERSHIPS & PARTNERING CONTRACTS

The Audit and Risk Manager gave a presentation to Members on Partnerships and Partnering Contracts.

The Internal Audit Service had been tasked with assessing the current situation of the Authority with regards to its partnership working.

Their objectives had been to:

- Review the Council’s Partnership Policy Framework
- Identify the Council’s key partnerships and partnering contracts
- Evaluate the governance arrangements for key partnerships
- Review arrangements for managing partnership risks

A draft report had been issued and presented to Strategy Group. There had been many positive messages throughout the review; an Action Plan had been implemented that was now being worked through to ensure that our partnership working improved.

RESOLVED – 1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That the Audit and Risk Manger report back to the Audit Committee when the work on the Action Plan had been completed.

Chair