

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

GENERAL REPORT

1. This report gives a brief summary of the items discussed at the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 18 January 2007.

Financial Statements Memorandum

2. The Audit Commission submitted a Financial Statements Memorandum summarising the matters arising from the audit for the year ended 31 March 2007.
3. The quality of the authority's financial statements had been high and following the amendments of some minor adjustments they had given the Authority an unqualified opinion.

Interim Report on Internal Audit Activities as at 29 December 2006

4. 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 which provided details of further reviews, investigations and other Internal Audit activities during the period.
5. 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
6. Each of the reviews had been rated as either "adequate" or "limited" from an internal control viewpoint and confirmation was received that all the Directors had undertaken to implement all of the key recommendations.
7. Internal Audit Services 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
8. 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 standard required.

Training Presentation – Partnerships and Partnering Contracts

9. The Audit and Risk Manager gave a presentation to Members on Partnerships and Partnering Contracts.
10. 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
11. A draft report had been presented to Strategy Group. There had been many positive messages throughout the review; an Action Plan had been implemented and was now being worked through to ensure that our partnership working improved.

Recommendation

12. The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR J WILSON
Chair of Audit Committee

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There are no background papers to this report.