
Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 27th June 2006

Matters for Information

1. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

The Corporate Governance Panel has been acquainted with the Council's use of resources judgement 2005/06 and the annual audit and inspection letter. With regard to the latter, the Council's Relationship Manager from the Audit Commission, has informed Members that the Council has made good progress against some of its Improvement Plan priorities but that progress against others has been slower than originally envisaged. The letter also reflects a varied performance against Best Value Performance Indicators. There has been positive direction of travel in respect of internal and external communication, performance management, risk management, learning and the Council's accommodation but issues of capacity which were raised in the Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment, will continue to be addressed.

A representative of the Council's external auditors attended the meeting and informed Members that, as it has an excellent rating, the Council is assessed on its direction of travel against its improvement plan. The use of resources judgement will form a significant part of the revised arrangements for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The Panel has discussed its role in approving the accounts, particularly in understanding the information presented to them and the willingness to question the Annual Statement. Members also have discussed the Council's aspirations regarding future assessments and have concluded that a judgement will need to be made to balance the benefits which will follow from higher ratings of performance and the investment of resources which will be required to achieve them.

A further report has been requested for the next meeting on progress against the action plan contained in the use of resources judgement.

2. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2005/06

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2006 to enable the audit to commence. Members have been acquainted with issues arising from the accounts relating to the Council's investments, its debtors

and creditors, pensions, the treatment of capital and the collection fund.

The Panel has discussed the Council's sources of income, excluding the Leisure Centre accounts which are treated separately. With regard to pensions, the Panel has been informed of the procedure for determining the Council's employer contributions and likely future trends in that respect.

3. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved a revised Risk Management Strategy following completion of an annual review.

4. UPDATE ON RISK REGISTER AND AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS

The Panel has received an update on the development of the Risk Register and of the Audit Plan. A further report on the Internal Audit Plan 2006/07 is to be submitted to the next meeting.

**5. CRIMINAL RECORD BUREAU:
CHECKS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

The Panel has approved the principle of and process for Criminal Records Bureau checks for Members. The requirement to undertake checks also will apply to independent members of the Standards Committee and to all members of the Leisure Centre Management Committees.

6. PERSISTENT AND/OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Panel has approved amendments to the Council's Persistent Complaints Policy in the light of experience gained since its introduction some two years previously.

7. COMPLAINTS

The Panel has received an analysis of the Council's internal complaints and a summary of complaints concerning the District Council which have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2005/06.

C J Stephens
Chairman