
Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 24th June 2008

Matter for Decision

1. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – STANDARDS COMMITTEE

By reference to a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is reproduced as an Appendix hereto) the Panel has been acquainted with the arrangements which the Council needs to have in place in order to comply with new duties placed on it by the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. Having considered the changes required to the Constitution to implement the Regulations, the Panel

RECOMMEND

that the Council approve the changes required to the Constitution as set out in Section 2 of the appended report.

Matters for Information

2. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2007/08

The Panel has approved the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2008 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 questioned the way in which Eastfield House is presented in the accounts and particularly the valuation assessed by the District Valuer. Nevertheless, the Panel has acknowledged the non-tangible and longer term benefits to be derived from the Operations Centre over a prolonged period.

The Panel has discussed the Council's sources of income, excluding the Leisure Centre accounts which are treated separately. The Panel has also been advised that the accounts will be publicised via the Council's website and through the District Wide publication.

3. BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

In noting the increasing levels of fraud detection and sanction activity undertaken by the Council, the Panel has approved a policy for the prosecution of benefits claimants, landlords, employees and Members who may commit benefit fraud and has authorised the Fraud Manager to undertake court hearings and issue formal cautions and administrative penalties as necessary. Additionally, the Panel has authorised staff within the Fraud Team to undertake investigations into fraud affecting all other District Council services and to report to the relevant Head of Service on the outcomes, findings and recommendations arising from these investigations.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

The Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, which is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006. The review reveals that the Council's internal audit service meets the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Audit Practice. The Panel has noted the external auditor's positive endorsement of the service and identified areas for improvement. The Panel has authorised a review of the Council's effectiveness against CIPFA's best practice guidance for Audit Committees to be undertaken.

**5. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE:
INTERNAL AUDIT AND ASSURANCE PLAN**

The Panel has approved the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan for the twelve months period commencing 1st August 2008.

6. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2008/09

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the planned work to be undertaken at the Council over the 2008/09 financial year by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP.

7. COMPLAINTS

The Panel has received an analysis of the Council's internal complaints and a summary of complaints which have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2007/08.

**8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN:
LOCAL SETTLEMENT OF COMPLAINT**

The Panel has received and noted details of a complaint made against the Council by a member of the public and the terms of compensatory payment negotiated by way of a local settlement.

**9. COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT COMPLAINT:
AWARD OF COMPENSATION**

The Panel has approved a sum of £1,085.31 to be awarded as compensatory payment to a complainant under the Council's internal complaints system.

C J Stephens
Chairman