
Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 23rd September 2008

Matters for Information

10. HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY

The Panel has been acquainted with the activity of the Benefits Fraud Investigation Team over the period from 2005 to 2008 and is encouraged by the level of partnership work being undertaken by the Team with a range of agencies including the Department for Work and Pensions, H M Revenue and Customs, the Police Authority, the Customs and Borders Agency and the National Health Service.

The Panel has commended the Benefits Fraud Investigation Team for the level of performance achieved and noted that future performance reports will be submitted annually to the Panel.

11. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel has been acquainted with the progress made against the 2007/08 Annual Audit Plan and the performance standards achieved. Members have been informed of the Audit and Risk Manager's opinion on the level of assurance provided by the Council's internal control environment in terms of the effective exercise of its functions.

12. RISK REGISTER

The Panel has been acquainted with changes made to the Risk Register between the period 1st April to 31st August 2008 inclusive.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Panel has been acquainted with progress made to embed risk management within the Council and has noted the work undertaken to improve the Council's current rating to level 3 against the risk management standard as part of the external auditors key line of enquiry review.

14. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL

The Panel has reviewed its own effectiveness against CIPFA's best practice guidance for Audit Committees. In so doing, the Panel has approved an action plan prepared to address the areas for

improvement and has referred issues relating to its terms of reference to the Democratic Structure Working Party.

15. PROTOCOL BETWEEN THE LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In accordance with a CIPFA/SOLACE publication on Good Governance in Local Government, the Panel has approved the content of a protocol for the relationship between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, an issue which has been outstanding from the Council's Governance Statement.

16. GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Panel has approved the Governance Statement which summarises the corporate governance work carried out in 2007/08 and identifies matters to be addressed during 2008/09. The Panel has been assured by the Council's external auditors that they are satisfied that the Council's system of internal control is being adhered to.

17. APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF 2007/08 ACCOUNTS

The Panel has approved the report and accounts for the year 2007/08. Having endorsed the Council's Letter of Representation, Members have been informed by the Council's external auditors that an unqualified opinion will be provided on the accounts. Matters contained in the action plan to the auditor's report have also been noted.

C J Stephens
Chairman