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# **Corporate Governance Panel**

**Report of the meeting held on 23rd June 2009**

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## **Matters for Information**

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### **1. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

In receiving the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2007/08 from the Audit Commission, the Panel has been informed that the Council's rate of improvement in priority areas compares well with that of other District Councils. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the Council had consistently exceeded the Audit Commission's criteria for "performing well". A copy of the letter has been distributed separately to all Members.

### **2. HOUSING BENEFIT COMPLAINT: AWARD OF COMPENSATION**

*(The following item was considered as exempt information under paragraphs 4 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)*

The Panel has received and noted details of a complaint made against the Council by a member of the public with regard to a delay in supplying a replacement cheque to a benefit claimant. Following investigation, the complaint was upheld and a compensatory payment of £50 has been made in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

### **3. AUDIT STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

The Panel has received details of the approach to be undertaken by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, for the audit of the Council's accounts for 2008/09. These will include the former Leisure Centre Management Committees for the last time, following the decision to wind up the individual joint committees.

### **4. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2008/09**

The Panel has approved the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009.

The Panel expressed some concern at the reported deficit in the pension fund but was informed that whilst the fund assets are currently valued at the market value for investments, a full valuation every three years takes account of a wide variety of factors including liability and potential changes in investment markets. This is used to evaluate changes in the employer's contribution rate. Concern was

also expressed at the risks associated with the Council's approach to long term investments but the Panel was given an assurance that appropriate procedures are in place through the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

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

The Panel has approved the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan for the twelve months period commencing 1st August 2009.

**6. ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK**

The outcome of a review of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework has been received by the Panel and Members have endorsed the content of a revised Action Plan. The review concluded that the Council has good internal control measures in place which helps to account for the very low level of fraud against the authority.

**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 2008/09.

Complaints have fallen marginally compared to the previous year with internal complaints totalling 17 in 2008/09 and Ombudsman enquiries also at 17. Of the latter, 7 were judged to be premature and referred to the District Council for preliminary investigation. None of the complaints resulted in maladministration or local settlements.

C J Stephens  
Chairman