

Summary of Proceedings of the 4 February Audit Panel

The Audit Panel considered the following reports:

1. Education PFI Internal Audit Report

This was deferred to the next meeting. Members asked for a general introduction and overview of the Education pfi contract, how it is performing and the potential for change.

2. Corporate Risk Management

The Risk Manager reported verbally that progress against the actions plans presented in November were generally in accordance with the anticipated timelines. A review of the Risk Management Strategy was starting; this would fit with the new Comprehensive Area Assessment performance framework and take more account of partnership working.

The Risk Manager recommended a new electronic Risk Management course 'Modern Councillor.' This was a useful tool, free and in line with the Audit Commission recommendation that all members receive appropriate training. More details were available from the Members' Training Manager.

3. Audit and Assurance Services Progress Report

The Panel asked questions on the audit work relating to the Internal Audit Plan for 2007/08, since the last meeting of the Audit Panel in November 2007. There was discussion on audit staff vacancies, implementation of the new financial system, fire risk assessments, Learning Disabilities follow-up and leaving Care 16 Pus Support.

There was disappointment with the proportion of new gas installations failing inspection and Members agreed that the Panel Chairman would write to the Chairman of the Housing Committee, requesting more information to the next Panel meeting.

Asked about the audit process regarding service areas receiving 'limited' or 'no' assurance, the Head of Audit and Assurance said these are revisited after 6 months and progress reports issued if necessary. The Audit Panel can ask for further details where required.

The Panel asked that health and safety risks be reported to a future meeting and that where 'follow-up' opinions are reported, these are marked with the direction of travel.

4. Financial Statements 2007/08 Risk Assessment

The Panel considered a report concerning the risk assessment process and approach in relation to preparation and production of the 2007/08 Financial Statements.

Members noted the report and asked whether more automation in the production of accounts would be feasible.

5. Code of Corporate Governance

The Panel noted a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance and the Director of Finance & Resources concerning the draft Code of Corporate Governance.

6. Timetable and Approach to Producing the Annual Governance Statement for 2007/08

The Panel noted a report detailing the background to the Annual Governance Statement and the proposed actions to produce this in accordance with best practice and the timetable.

7. Capital Scheme. Madeira Drive Seafront Improvements

The Panel considered a report on Madeira Drive Seafront Improvements, noting that all internal audit recommendations had been agreed and 'immediate' actions identified in the management action plan had been implemented.

However Members were concerned at the control weaknesses in this case in which too much reliance had been placed on one individual, and in particular that there were no notes of meetings.

8. Data Security Review

The Head of Audit and Assurance gave a presentation on the Data Security Review, carried out in the wake of a number of national cases of loss of sensitive data.

Members noted the action already taken and other work in progress to help improve controls.