

ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER MARCH 2008 – ACTION PLAN

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Summary: To present the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter Action Plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter from the Audit Commission was presented to the Audit Committee on 23 April 2008.
- 1.2 The Audit Commission identified actions needed by the Council to improve performance. These have been incorporated into an action plan at Appendix A.
- 1.3 Separate action plans have been prepared to address recommendations made in separate reports issued on Access to Services and a Strategic Approach to Housing. Actions identified in the Access to Services follow up have either been picked up by the County-wide Forum or, if they were specific to Copeland, they have been linked to Corporate Plan objectives. The Strategic Approach to Housing action plan has been reported to the Executive on 27 May 2008. Issues from the Direction of Travel report will be picked up by the Improvement Board.

2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business and that it safeguards and properly accounts for public money. The action plan will assist the Council in meeting these responsibilities.
- 3.2 A follow up of agreed actions will be carried out in line with normal internal audit practice and presented to the Audit Committee at a future meeting.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the action plan be noted and approved.

List of Appendices:

Appendix A - Annual Audit and Inspection Letter Action Plan

List of Background Documents: Annual Audit & Inspection Letter March 2008

Officers Consulted: Corporate Team

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AUDIT COMMITTEE 28 05 08 Appendix A

Action No.	Priority	Action needed	Action Agreed	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1	Medium	<p>Performance Ensure that the Council's overall arrangements for improving performance are reviewed and strengthened.</p>	Development of corporate improvement plan, with identified leads, deadlines and actions. Will monitor and report quarterly.	H Mitchell Head of Policy & Performance	31/3/09
2	High	<p>Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for dealing with any current staff shortages and capacity issues and ensure that the provision of key services is secure beyond the short term. [Key services referred to included finance, benefits and strategic housing functions].</p>	<p>Finance – Head of Finance & IT is being advertised. At the same time, IT Manager and Accountancy Services Manager will be advertised.</p> <p>Revenues & Benefits – a formal agreement, for the management of the Revenues & Benefits service, is to be put in place with Carlisle City Council. A Service Level Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding has been forwarded to Carlisle for signing.</p> <p>Regeneration, including Strategic Housing function – 2 Head of Service posts (Development Strategy and Development Operations) have been advertised. Permanent Housing Manager post to be advertised.</p>	<p>G Ayling Interim Head of Finance & Business Devt.</p> <p>J Salt Head of Customer Services</p> <p>F McMorrow Corporate Director Economic Prosperity & Sustainability</p>	<p>30/6/08</p> <p>31/5/08</p> <p>31/7/08</p>

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Action No.	Priority	Action needed	Action Agreed	Responsible Officer	Target Date
3	Medium	<p>Value for Money Ensure the Council's progress on having clear information on costs and comparative information is used in a comprehensive manner to review value for money within services and corporately, especially with regard to the experience of users and communities in relation to service effectiveness.</p>	A Task Group has been set up to identify unit costs and to establish best practice to assist in reviewing vfm in service delivery.	P Robson Acting Accountancy Services Manager	30/9/08
4	Medium	<p>Ensure stakeholders are consulted more fully regarding what they see as the Council's priorities.</p>	6 public priorities, identified at the end of 2007, to be developed as basis of Council plans and improvements.	H Mitchell Head of Policy & Performance	31/3/09
5	High	<p>Financial Reporting Ensure that the accounts presented for audit are free from material and non-trivial errors and that robust internal quality assurance procedures are in place to improve the quality and timeliness of the financial statements and associated working papers.</p>	Bought in dedicated Accountancy expertise at year end. Planned meetings with the external auditor to review requirements. Detailed timetable in place and regular update meetings.	G Ayling Interim Head of Finance & Business Devt.	30/6/08
6	High	<p>Housing Strategy Review the Council's strategic approach to housing and ensure that the service is fit for purpose.</p>	An action plan, drawn up in response to the Strategic Approach to Housing report, is on the agenda for the Executive meeting 27 May 2008. Progress on implementation of the actions will be reported quarterly.	F McMorrow Corporate Director Economic Prosperity & Sustainability	31/3/09

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Action No.	Priority	Action needed	Action Agreed	Responsible Officer	Target Date
7	High	<p>Partnerships Improve arrangements to identify and mitigate potential risks associated with partnership working.</p>	Setting up a register of partnerships, including accountable body status, and financial governance procedures – including risk management.	G Ayling Interim Head of Finance & Business Devt.	31/7/08