

COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOOD GOVERNANCE STANDARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICES IN 2005/06**A MANAGEMENT SUMMARY****1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council adopted the Good Governance Standard for Public Services on 28 July 2005. The Standard provides a national framework for assessing good governance practice. Full Council, as the governing body, has overall responsibility for implementing the Standard and approved an action plan to improve compliance with the requirements of the Standard. Corporate Team monitors the operation of the Standard, ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place. In addition, internal audit carries out an independent review annually, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements and the extent of compliance with the approved Standard.
- 1.2 The scope of the audit covered monitoring compliance with the Standard and reporting on the progress of the action plan.

2.0 KEY FINDINGS

- 2.1 Detailed comments are given in Appendix A, which shows the full Good Governance Standard for Public Services and how this is being applied. Appendix B shows progress on the action plan agreed by Full Council on 28 July 2005.
- 2.2 We found that the Code was generally effective and being complied with.
- 2.3 A number of items had been progressed since the previous year. These included: -
- adopting the Good Governance Standard for Public Services, replacing the existing Code of Corporate Governance
 - expanding the format of the Strategic Risk Register to detail action taken and reviewing the Strategic Risk Register quarterly
 - preparing and regularly updating operational risk registers
 - adopting Customer Service Standards corporately
 - drafting a revised Corporate Plan
 - introducing more rigorous performance monitoring procedures
 - carrying out some independent spot checks of performance data
 - using Audit Commission pro formas on Direction of Travel, Value for Money and the Use of Resources to evaluate performance
 - carrying out a Members personal development programme to identify training needs and to formulate a Member training plan
 - holding a workshop for Members on Corporate Governance
 - development of the Communications Strategy
 - drafting revised Financial Regulations
 - appointing a Process Improvement Team
 - adopting a revised Employee Code of Conduct
 - drafting revised guidance for Members appointed to Outside Bodies

COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOOD GOVERNANCE STANDARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICES IN 2005/06

- giving organizational values a higher profile by publishing Corporate Team's commitments
- adopting a comprehensive Equality Policy and action plan
- reviewing the Confidential Reporting Code
- revising the Constitution, including the format of Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- delivering training on Contract Standing Orders
- delivering training on Data Protection

2.4 There were only 3 items still to be progressed from the 2004/05 Corporate Governance action plan. The main issues related to: -

- Linking performance to budgets within Service Plans and Performance Monitoring reports
- Formalizing the manner in which the Council considers external risks arising at other bodies that could be applicable to this Council by the Monitoring Officer preparing a quarterly report to the Executive on issues arising
- formally approving the Communications Strategy

2.5 Progress on these outstanding issues is monitored quarterly.

2.6 Progress had been made on the actions agreed by Full Council on 28/7/05. Of the 24 actions, 9 had been fully implemented, 7 had been part implemented, 1 was no longer applicable and 7 were outstanding. Any outstanding issues from this action plan, shown at Appendix B, will be added to the quarterly follow ups reported to the Audit Committee.

3.0 **CONCLUSION**

3.1 Overall the Council's corporate governance arrangements are in line with the Good Governance Standard for Public Services and the Standard is being complied with.

3.2 Significant progress has been made in developing and updating the arrangements, despite the delay in approving and implementing the organisational restructure, and actions have been identified to address the outstanding issues.

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