

AUDIT COMMISSION REPORTS

Report By: Chief Internal Auditor

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To present to members of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee a suggested framework to manage the process of receipt and action follow-up on all Audit Commission reports received by the Council.

Financial Implications

2. None.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT: Subject to any comments from the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee the framework for the control of Audit Commission reports be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

Reasons

3. The Audit and Corporate Governance Committee considered a suggested framework for the Annual Governance Statement on 25th January, 2008 and 29th February, 2008. Part of the process involves actions that arise from the Council's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter and other Audit Commission reports.
4. Previously in April 2006 the Audit Committee adopted a framework for monitoring progress with action plans arising from Audit Commission reports. However, this was not fully embedded. It is now necessary to re-establish an agreed approach for the future benefit of the Council.

Considerations

5. At the start of each financial year the Audit Commission will inform Cabinet and the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee of the reviews it intends to undertake as part of their audit arrangements.
6. The relevant Head of Service will be appointed the Council's lead officer and the Audit Commission staff carrying out the review will liaise direct with this officer.
7. Copies of the draft report will be sent to the Head of Service for each review and the Chief Internal Auditor.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tony Ford, Chief Internal Auditor on tel: (01432) 260425

8. The Head of Service will then have three weeks to comment on the draft, this will include meeting with the Audit Commission, their Director and, if required, the Chief Internal Auditor to discuss the report.
9. Once finalised the Audit Commission will send copies of reports to the Chief Executive, the client Director, the Director of Resources, the relevant Head of Service and the Chief Internal Auditor.
10. The final report will identify priority 3 recommendations, these being high risk areas needing prompt action.
11. All action plans will be signed off by the relevant Director and returned to the Audit Commission within two weeks of receipt of the final report.
12. Copies of all signed action plans must be sent to the Chief Internal Auditor.
13. The relevant Director will ensure that the report is presented to Cabinet, the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
14. The Chief Internal Auditor will inform the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and Cabinet of the progress being made on all recommendations.
15. Once this process has been approved the Chief Internal Auditor will inform all Corporate Management Board members and Heads of Service accordingly.

Risk Management

16. If the Council does not have a robust process for managing Audit Commission reports there is the possibility that required actions are not acted upon, which could impact adversely on the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

Background Papers

Report titled Audit Commission Reports presented to the Audit Committee on 7th April, 2006.