
2003/04 AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor John Williams,
Leader and all Cabinet Members**

Responsible Director(s) - Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To present the 2003/04 Audit and Inspection letter.

Information and Analysis

2. The attached letter (**Appendix 1**) will be jointly presented at your meeting by Mark Nicholson of Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the Council's Audit Manager and Sarah Diggle the Council's Relationship Manager from the Audit Commission.
3. The letter combines the two area of external assessment, audit and inspection. Previously the two areas were dealt with separately and now the Council receives one definitive external review of its overall performance.
4. The letter presents a very positive picture of the Council identifying its continued sound financial control and good performance. The letter is unable to give a final view on the Corporate Assessment undertaken in October as the result is subject to appeal by the Council. The initial score was an improved GOOD but the Council is contesting the score and believes it should be EXCELLENT. An update on progress on the appeal may be available at your meeting.
5. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the Council which brings together the Corporate Assessment and Service Scores is initially GOOD although improvements have been made in a number of areas on last year's CPA. Should the Corporate Assessment be upgraded to EXCELLENT the overall CPA score will also increase to EXCELLENT.
6. Members will see from the Executive Summary that the key messages for the Council are very positive with two areas identified to be addressed. The two areas are currently being reviewed and will be addressed in the next financial year.

Outcome of Consultation

7. No consultation was undertaken on the content of this report.

Legal Implications

8. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

9. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

10. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

11. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Key Decisions

12. The content of this report does not represent a key decision.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that Cabinet are requested to receive the Audit and Inspection letter.

Reasons

14. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons to enable the Council to receive the results of its external assessment.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

2003/04 Audit and Inspection Letter

Paul Wildsmith : Extension 2302
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