

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillor A Wedderkopp (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Denington, Hall, Paul, Mrs Smith and
Mrs Whitmarsh

Officers: Ms S Adam (Strategic Director)
Mr P Carter (Financial Services Manager)
Mrs G Croucher (Democratic Services Officer)
Mr C Gunn (Group Auditor, South West Audit Partnership)
Mr J Thornberry (Strategic Director)

Also Present: Mr T Bowditch (Audit Commission)

26. Apology

Councillor Govier

27. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2007 were taken as read and were signed.

28. Annual Governance Statement

Mr Terry Bowditch, Audit Manager, the Audit Commission (AC) gave Members an update on the revised framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. The framework was based on Good Governance Standards for Public Services and would provide support for the new requirement for councils to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

The Governance Statement subsumed the requirement to provide an annual Statement of Internal Control and would cover all significant corporate systems, processes and controls.

The preparation of the Statement required a corporate focus and would need to be open, honest and credible and linked to an embedded assurance framework. It would be the end product of the annual review process.

To meet the new requirements, the Audit Commission had recommended that councils publish the Governance Statement in the Annual Report or as a stand-alone document and to include a summary in the financial statements.

29. Annual Efficiency Statement

Considered report previously circulated, that detailed the progress made by the Council to make efficiency savings each year.

Local Authorities were required to demonstrate 2.5% per annum efficiency gains between 2005/2006 and 2007/2008 when compared to the 2004/2005 budget position. These gains were measured against set financial targets and included both capital and revenue spending.

Progress would be reported through the annual Efficiency Statement (AES) and would be updated three times a year. The most recent AES submissions showed total expected efficiencies to be well above the targets set and details of the progress made in reaching these targets was submitted.

Prior to submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government, the AES would need to be signed by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer.

Reported that a number of changes to the AES had been proposed by the Government and included new reporting arrangements. From July 2008 the AES would be replaced by a single performance indicator and targets would also be increased from 2.5% to 3%.

Resolved that the report be noted.

30. Internal Audit Plan 2007/2008 – Progress Review

Considered report previously circulated, which provided an update on the significant finding and recommendations since September 2007.

Details were also reported of the audits completed for the period between September 2007 and December 2007 which included any significant findings or recommendations.

Resolved that the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 7.08 p.m.)