

**AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**17 MARCH 1999**

Present: Councillors Birch (Chairman), Beadsley, Blatchford, Egan,  
Good, McCormack, North, Mrs Shillcock and Mrs Sutcliffe.

Apologies for Absence were received from:  
Councillor Wade

**27. Substitute Member**

The Committee noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member under Standing Order 38:

Councillor Egan for Councillor Wade.

**28. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 February 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**29. External Audit – Management Letter 1997/98 (Item 1)**

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which included the Management Letter for the financial year 1997/98 from the Council's external auditors, KPMG. The Committee noted that the auditors had issued an unqualified opinion on the authority's accounts for the year.

The auditors highlighted good performance in areas such as the Council establishing a clear vision of its purpose, underpinned by well developed financial and performance management reporting. It also highlighted substantially improved internal audit arrangements, a business like approach to Best Value, and good performance on early retirement. In terms of KPMG's programme for the coming year, the Committee noted that Value for Money Studies would be taking place in the areas of service and financial planning; charging, income and Best Value; and community safety.

The auditors made six recommendations. These related to the collection of housing rents; the finance staffing structure in the Social Services and Housing Department; the Year 2000 issue; rent arrears and benefit claims; the reporting of early retirements and the presentation of the accounts. For each of these recommendations, the Corporate Management Team had responded, and the Committee agreed to endorse these responses. The Committee discussed progress in relation to the three recommendations relating to the Social Services and Housing Department in detail and agreed that the Social Services and Housing Committee's next Quarterly Operations Report should include a report on progress in these areas.

**RESOLVED** that

- (i) the Corporate Management Team's response to the external auditors recommendations be endorsed; and
- (ii) a report be included in the next Social Services and Housing Quarterly Operations Report on the progress made to resolve the Housing and Council Tax Benefit; Social Services and Housing finance structure and housing rent arrears issues raised in the Management Letter.

**30. Internal Audit Assurance Report: July – December 1998 Update (Item 2)**

At its last meeting the Committee had considered the Internal Audit Assurance Report for July – December 1998, but owing to the timing of the meeting several departments had not responded formally to some of the recommendations of Internal Audit. The Committee was now advised that responses had been received to all the audit reports issued and in all but a few instances the recommendations had been agreed. The Committee also noted the information reported in relation to those areas where a limited assurance opinion had been given.

**RESOLVED** that the update to the Internal Audit Assurance Report covering the period July to December 1998 be noted.

**31. Internal Audit Plan 1999/2000 (Item 3)**

A report on the proposed Internal Audit Plan for the 1999/2000 year indicated that provision for a total of 155 audits had been made. This represented 920 audit days, 700 of which would be undertaken by Deloitte and Touche, the Council's contractor. The Committee noted the risk assessment criteria set out in the report used to classify whether a service area would be 'high', 'medium' or 'low' risk and approved the Audit Plan.

**RESOLVED** that the outlined annual Audit Plan, as summarised in table 1 and detailed in Annexe 'A' of the report, be approved.

**32. Item for Information**

The Committee noted the following item submitted for information only:

Audit Commission Publications and Reports (Item 4)

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and  
concluded at 8.50pm

**CHAIRMAN**