

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of: AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 21 January 2004

Present: Councillor F Chaudhry (in the Chair);
Councillors J P Costello, C Fitzgerald, J Smith,
B Theckston and J F Walton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors T D Pickstone, G Sharkey and B Vincent

Public Attendance: There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

S.1094 AUDIT AND INSPECTION ANNUAL LETTER 2003

A report of the Director of Finance and E-Government was submitted which presented to members a draft copy of the Audit Commission's Audit and Inspection Annual Letter for 2003. This particular Letter replaced the Annual Audit Letter and summarised the conclusions and significant issues arising from the Commission's Audit and Inspection Programme during 2003 and commented on the other current issues. The Letter was more performance orientated but still placed extreme importance on sound financial management.

The Audit and Inspection Letter was presented by Clive Portman and Linda Kettles of the Audit Commission who summarised the key messages within the Letter:-

Corporate Performance Assessment

- The Audit Commission has commended the performance of Bury MBC as their 'core' service improvement scores had been across the whole organisation. As a result, Bury have been acknowledged as the 'most improved Council in the country', and is well placed to further improve services.

Key Messages

- Accounts – Unqualified audit opinion given
- Performance Management – Good and Improving
- Sickness Absence - is being proactively managed
- Financial Standing – Sound Financial Management
- Risk Management – Considerable progress made

Further progress is planned as Bury seeks to:

- further refine the performance management framework in year two and streamline the service development plans accordingly

- build on the learning from the pilot project management programme to promote and expand the use of the new system
- complete implementation of the risk management work
- further develop policy led budgets utilising the medium term financial strategy
- continue work on developing an outcomes based performance framework using 'measuring what matters' and user focus
- progress the ongoing and significant planned Information Technology developments
- extend Investors in People accreditation to all departments by May 2004.

Change of Auditors

Mr Portman reported that the Council's Auditors would change with effect from April 2005 when KPMG would take over responsibility. He explained that this was consistent with the rotation policy applied by the Audit Commission.

Members referred to the service improvements highlighted within the Letter and how, for instance, the improved Performance Indicators would be reflected in improved services for the public.

Delegated decision:

That the Annual Letter be accepted and the inclusion of any actions required into Departmental Service Development and Delivery Plans be supported.

COUNCILLOR F CHAUDHRY
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 5.30pm and finished at 6.15 pm)