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| TITLE | : DISTRICT AUDIT "FOLLOW UP REVIEW OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC ARRANGEMENTS 2001/02" – AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN | | |
| TO / ON | : SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE | | 10 MARCH 2003 |
| | : AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE | | 12 MARCH 2003 |
| | : EXECUTIVE | | 19 MARCH 2003 |
| REPORT FROM | : ACTING DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES | | |
| STATUS | : FOR PUBLICATION | | |

1.0 TYPE OF DECISION

1.1 What type of decision is to be taken:-

| EXECUTIVE DECISION | | | | COUNCIL DECISION |
|--------------------|----|---------|----|------------------|
| Key | No | Non Key | No | No |

1.2 If a key decision, has it been included in the Forward Plan

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|--------------|--|
| Inclusion in Forward Plan | N/A | Date of Plan | |
|---------------------------|-----|--------------|--|

2.0 SUMMARY

This report summarises the "Follow up Review of the New Democratic Arrangements" carried out by District Audit and sets out the response.

3.0 OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTIONS (with reasons)

Members can accept, reject or amend the action plan.

Members are recommended to endorse the action plan

4.0 THIS REPORT HAS THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS

| | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------|
| Corporate Aims | The action plan will impact on the corporate objective of improving the quality and availability of Council services. | | |
| Policy Framework | There are no direct implications for the policy framework. | | |
| Statement by Monitoring Officer | The action plan is consistent with statutory requirements set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and compliments the modernising agenda. | | |
| Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government | There are no direct financial resource implications arising from the report or the action plan. | | |
| Human Resource IT/Land and Property Implications | | | |
| Wards/Area Boards affected | | | |
| Scrutiny Panel's Interest | All panels. | | |
| Consultations | | | |
| Call-in | | | |
| Briefings | Executive Members/ Chair | | Chief Executive |

5.0 INTRODUCTION

5.1 In November/December 2002 District Audit carried out a review to follow up their initial assessment of the new democratic arrangements undertaken in Autumn 2001. The review was to detail and assess progress made and the developments put into place and to ensure that key issues previously highlighted were being addressed. The approach taken by District Audit was to review documents, observe meetings and carry out interviews with key members and officers.

6.0 ISSUES RAISED BY THE INITIAL REVIEW

6.1 These included:

- lack of clarity about internal management arrangements
- lack of understanding of the new arrangements by members
- lack of clarity about the role of lead members
- revision of the scheme of delegation
- difficulties in the recording of decisions and provision of information to members
- Constitutional Working Group highlighted as an element of notable practice.

7.0 KEY FINDINGS

7.1 The full District Audit report is attached to this report (Appendix 1). (An abridged version of the main findings is attached as Appendix 2). The report is positive and acknowledges the significant changes made to the Council's democratic arrangements and the fact that these are working well in a number of areas chiefly:

- restructuring and renaming of the Executive portfolio's and reallocation of some of the workloads.
- clear links from the portfolios to the Council's Corporate Aims
- recognition of a new leadership and profile for the new arrangements
- a positive response from both Senior Members and Officers
- greater clarity about the new arrangements, respective roles and responsibilities.
- profile of Best Value raised considerably within the Authority (Performance Management Portfolio)

Since the work was carried out the majority of the issues have been addressed.

8.0 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The report is for noting and comment and Members are requested to consider the action plan.

8.2 The Action Plan is attached to this report at Appendix 3. In most cases it shows that the recommendations have been implemented or that work on implementation is well advanced.

Background documents:

District Audit Report – Draft Version – December 2002 “Follow Up Review of the New Domestic Arrangements”.

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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