

Formal Response to the Auditors Report of the Improvement Plan 2004.05

The Authority is pleased that the District Auditor has certified in that the Council's Improvement Plan was produced in accordance with Section 7 of the Local Government Act 1999 and the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice.

As noted in the Statutory Report many of the recommendations made by the Auditor have already been incorporated into the Council's Improvement work programme. However, the Council recognizes the importance of developing its arrangements in accordance with the recommendations listed below.

S1 In order to further enhance the Council's risk assessment, performance measures and information should be produced for all corporate and service areas.

A programme of local performance indicator development is currently underway to ensure all services, including corporate issues, can report on performance. This work, where appropriate will be supported by the developments of the Performance Measurement Review and the Council's own Corporate Scorecard.

This programme to be complete by 31st March 2005 with adjustments made as the Performance Measurement Review and Scorecard develops.

S2 The Council's strategic aims, objectives and improvement priorities should be identified as soon as possible and be available for the 2005-2006 budget setting process. Performance against the associated key success factors and measures should be reported in future Improvement Plans and Summaries

The 2005/06 Budget Process will take cognisance of Corporate priorities identified in the Corporate Plan. The refinement of the Council's strategic aims, objectives and improvement priorities is being addressed as part of the revision of the Corporate Plan. The Council has given a commitment to developing a Corporate Balanced Scorecard which will include its strategic aims, objectives and improvement priorities supported by appropriate measures and targets. This scorecard will be informed by and progressed from the Corporate Plan and progress subsequently reported in future Improvement Plans and Summaries.

The Corporate Balanced Scorecard is projected to be in place by 31st March 2005.

S3 Ensure that deteriorating performance is identified, evaluated and, where necessary, remedial actions undertaken.

Performance reports incorporating deteriorating performance measures are to be submitted to Directorate Management Teams and Policy and Scrutiny Committees for consideration and agreement of remedial actions as necessary, in accordance with the Performance Management Framework.

The Clarification of Policy and Scrutiny Committee roles will help to ensure consistency in the submission and evaluation of these measures.

Clarification of roles to be complete and implemented, including consistent submission of performance reports by 31st March 2005