

Extract from the draft minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee of 23rd April 2008:-

94. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER 2006/07

The Heads of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) on behalf of the Audit Commission which detailed the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2006/07.

Maria Grindley from the Audit Commission introduced the report and highlighted the following key messages:

- (i) Pace of change in the Council was impressive
- (ii) Good cross-party leadership
- (iii) Robust but challenging budget for 2008/09
- (iv) Market testing of leisure was underway
- (v) The Council focused on priorities for local people
- (vi) Leadership with other partners was good, e.g. on the recent flooding which took place in the City in 2007

Maria Grindley said that the Audit and Inspection Letter was a positive letter and that for the coming year, work should continue on making the Council's priorities clear, continued work on value for money, transformation, increased partnership working and risk management.

Councillor Price asked with regard to transformation questions concerning accessibility to the Council's services. In response Maria Grindley said that the organisation had to focus on accessibility to all of its services and not just one part. Councillor Brundin added that the Council was undertaking a comprehensive restructuring of customer services across the whole Council.

Councillor Price was disappointed that there had been no improvement in the use of resources, and that the work, which had previously been undertaken on diversity in the Council had taken a step backwards through lack of Officer and Member input. He said that this was now changing, but had not been highlighted in the letter. He said that the partnership working was good, however this had been rather narrow and focussed on specific issues such as the flooding, and this needed to be widened to include partnership working on culture.

Councillor Brundin said with regard to health issues, there was little that the Council could do, as this was an area outside of the Council responsibility, however it was an area where partnership working would be good, as the Council would be able to influence the partners.

Councillor Simmons with regard to Health Scrutiny asked the Audit Commission if it had a view on the Council's proposed restructuring of Scrutiny. In response Maria Grindley said that the Audit Commission did not have a view as the restructuring was a matter for the Council, however the Audit Commission

would look at the scrutiny role if it caused problems etc. in the provision of services.

Councillor Campbell added that the recently established Neighbourhood Action Groups was an example of good partnership working.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To note and welcome the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2006/07;
- (b) To support partnership working in the influencing and delivery of services.