

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting5th July 2007

1. Title of Item/Report

AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL AUDIT & INSPECTION LETTER 2007

2. Record of the Decision

Members were presented with the Audit Commission Annual Audit & Inspection Letter for 2006.

The Audit Commission was responsible for arranging for the audit of the accounts of the Council (either by private firms or through their own auditors). They were also responsible for undertaking an annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment and other service inspections.

A formal stage in this process was the production of the "Annual Audit & Inspection Letter", formerly, the Management Letter. The Annual Audit & Inspection Letter for 2006/07 had been received and was provided for Members' consideration.

The Annual Audit Letter provided a comprehensive and independent assessment of the "health" of the Council. In line with previous practice, a copy of the Annual Audit Letter would be sent to all Members of the Council.

Members noted that the Council had been recognised by the Audit Commission as being amongst the best ten in the country 'the premier league of stellar performers' and had achieved four stars and was improving strongly, which was the highest assessment possible.

The Commission had, however, identified areas for further improvement:-

- User satisfaction with public transport
- Areas of the housing service
- A drop in satisfaction levels of users with how the Council keeps them informed of services and benefits.
- Equality standards

Members noted the areas for improvement identified but pointed out that, particularly with regard to satisfaction with public transport, the Council's

influence was limited as transport was provided by private bus companies.

It was explained that there had been a decline in satisfaction levels with how the Council communicated with members of the public. This decline was apparent nationally and although this had affected Stockton, the Council remained in the top quartile of performance.

Members agreed that the letter was extremely positive and reflected the hard work undertaken by the Council. It was suggested that an appropriate press release should be prepared to reflect this achievement.

RESOLVED that the contents of the letter be noted and an appropriate press release be issued.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To inform Members and the public of the contents of the Audit Commission's Annual Audit Letter.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in this item as he was a member of the Tristar Homes Limited's Management Board

6. Details of any Dispensations

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

No later than midnight on Friday 13th July 2007

Proper Officer
09 October 2007