

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting17th December 2009

1. Title of Item/Report

Audit Commission Annual Audit & Inspection Letter 2009

2. Record of the Decision

Members were presented with the Audit Commission Annual Audit Letter for 2009.

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 leading the annual Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

A formal stage in this process was the production of the "Annual Audit Letter". The Annual Audit Letter for 2008/9 had been received and was presented to Members.

The Annual Audit Letter provided a comprehensive and independent assessment of the overall "health" of the Council. It reported on the detailed results of all service inspections and assessments and also referenced how the Council worked with key partners. In line with previous practice, a copy of the Annual Audit Letter would be sent to all Members of the Council.

The Audit Commission considered that Stockton on Tees Borough Council was improving well and was judged as being at level 4 (the highest rating) for its Use of Resources.

The Audit Commission had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council for 2008/9.

The Commission considers that the Council's arrangements for managing finances were excellent, with a strong value for money culture. The arrangements for governing the business were also judged as being excellent with a systematic approach to commissioning and procurement supported by high levels of partnership working and joint commissioning and resulting in savings.

It considered that the Council performed well at Managing Resources. For 2008/9 a new line of enquiry was introduced that related to how well the Council was managing its use of natural resources and how it was influencing others.

The annual audit letter complimented the Organisational and Area Assessment outcomes within the CAA framework and primarily focused on judging the Council's use of resources and value for money. It also included reference to a review, conducted jointly by the Audit Commission and Deloitte across the North East, in relation to how organisations were working together to tackle health inequalities. A more detailed review was also undertaken across Stockton of action being taken to address teenage pregnancy. Both of these informed the Area Assessment aspect of CAA.

The Commission considered that the Council needed to:-

Work with partners, using the recommendations in the health inequalities reports to improve targeting and performance management, making effective use of the voluntary sector and community views.

RESOLVED that contents of the Audit Commission Annual Audit Letter be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The Audit Commission was required to present its findings to Cabinet.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable.

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

Not later than Midnight on Tuesday, 29th December 2009

Proper Officer
21 December 2009