THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2005

Present: Councillor G Pinkney (Chair)
Councillors E Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale,
A Collinson, R Davison, H High,
D Myers, M Nicholls, Mrs M Nugent,
B Quinn and P Stradling

1.   **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 24 October 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2.   **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 1 November 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

     RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

3.   **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

     There were no members of the public present.

4.   **WORK PROGRAMME ISSUES**

     (i)   **Internal Audit Progress Report 2005/2006**

           Consideration was given to the report of the Audit Manager which updated the Committee on progress being made completing the 2005/2006 Audit Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

           The Audit Manager reported that Appendix 1 summarised the planned audit work completed by Internal Audit. The objectives of each audit were shown, along with conclusions and recommended actions agreed by the auditee. The two audits completed related to Members Allowances and BACSTEL IP. Appendix 2 to the report provided details of planned audit work currently in progress.

           In relation to the Members Allowances Audit, a Member made reference to the recommendation that where possible the Members Services Officer should arrange accommodation for Members at conferences so that they were all booked into the same hotel and could be contacted in case of emergency. He pointed out that this may not be practical on occasions when a Member has short notice of attendance at a conference. In case of an emergency, he suggested that it may be more appropriate for a Member to be contacted by mobile telephone rather than via the hotel.

           The Audit Manager advised that he would take the Members' comments on board.

With regard to the BACSTEL IP Audit, a Member referred to the incidents of over claiming and asked that advice be provided to relevant staff to prevent a reoccurence.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **IDeA Member Development Project Feedback Report**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Democratic Services and Administration which advised of feedback received in respect of the Member Development Project undertaken by IDeA, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Scrutiny Support Manager advised that the aim of the project was to adopt a sustainable strategic approach to Member development identifying needs linked to the Council's Corporate Objectives and Priorities, Members' community and leadership roles as well as their individual roles within the Council. It also aimed to produce Personal Development Plans for elected Members and a training strategy linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities, Improvement Agenda and Members' own needs.

The Scrutiny Support Manager outlined the findings of the IDeA which were attached as Appendix C to the report. Overall it showed that scrutiny at Easington was progressing well and identified general areas of future action for improvement in terms of supporting the take up of Member training and development. Specific areas of follow-up work in respect of the development of scrutiny were also highlighted.

The Member Development Steering Group would co-ordinate the production of a detailed Member Development Programme.

In discussion, reference was made to the suggestion that Members should meet to plan their approach before the formal Committee meetings. It was noted that the purpose of this was to give Members the opportunity to establish what they wanted to achieve from the meeting and formulate relevant questions.

Members welcomed the recommendations outlined in the report and following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

5. **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY**

There were no items to report.