

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

HELD ON THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2009

Present: Councillor G Pinkney (Chair)
Councillors E Bell, R Davison, G Johnson,
Mrs M Nugent and B Quinn.

Apology: Councillor Mrs G Bleasdale

1. **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 15 January 2009, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.
2. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THIRD QUARTER 2008/9**

Consideration was given to the report of the Principal Corporate Development Officer which gave details of the Council's performance against the new National Indicator set and the Corporate Local PIs for the third quarter of 2008/9, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

M Readman, Principal Corporate Development Officer reported that for 2008/9 there were a total of 198 National Indicators. From this national set, the Council previously agreed a Corporate reporting set, for performance management and monitoring purposes during the transitional year, based on:

- 19 Place Survey Indicators
- 24 Indicators for which the District Council had responsibility for collection and reporting
- 39 Key Local Area Agreement Indicators

The Council's set also included 11 Corporate Local Indicators, comprising ex Corporate Health BVPI's and key indicators from the Council's Corporate Plan.

Appendices 1 and 2 of the report showed the current data available for the local and district level national indicators for the end of the third quarter, 2008/9. The Place Survey had been completed; the results for these indicators would be reported once they were available, which was expected to be within the next couple of weeks.

As nine months of data for the new set was now available, it was possible to determine some improvement trends, giving an emerging picture of performance across the new National Performance Framework. Of the 11 Local key Corporate Indicators, 3 were cumulative, although one of these, secondary and deliberate fires, continued to show a massive reduction after nine months of the year. Of the remaining 8 indicators, 7 had improved since year-end and the other indicator had remained static at 0% (top 5% of earners from Ethnic Minority backgrounds).

She continued that it was pleasing to note that in relation to ex BVPI 12 sickness figures had further reduced from 9.12 days at the end of the last quarter, and from 9.27 days at year end, to an average of 8.47 days per employee at the end of the third quarter.

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It was also pleasing that ex BVPI 212 – average re-let times for Council owned homes had further reduced to 22 days, which placed the indicator in top quartile positioning.

As Members were aware the new National Indicator set for all Councils came into effect on 1st April 2008, replacing the previous Best Value Performance Indicators. As previous reports had outlined, the new set retained some of the ex BVPIs and also introduced a number of brand new indicators. The Council previously agreed a set of Indicators to be reported through Council for management, monitoring and Information purposes.

There were 24 indicators for which the District Council had responsibility and details of progress made in relation to each of these were set out in the report.

The report also outlined the results for the following areas identified for particular focus for continued improvement during the transitional year:-

- NI 158 percentage of non-decent homes
- NI 160 satisfaction of tenants with landlord services
- NI 191 kgs of household waste collected (residual)
- NI 192 household waste recycled and composted
- NI 196 fly tipping

To conclude, M Readman stated that as this was a new data set, which included a number of brand new National Indicators, introduced on 1st April 2008, much of the data being gathered would provide baseline information, which could only be properly analysed from next year.

The Council had continued to maintain its focus on Performance Management during the transitional year to ensure effective delivery of services to the public and to manage any areas highlighted as needing action.

In relation to the information where the Council had established data sets, continued improvement had been seen across most areas, however, it was recognised that in some areas there was some cause for concern, such as in relation to recycling and affordable housing. The issues surrounding the performance within these areas were in the main, caused by the current economic climate and were being experienced by other Councils across the country. Whilst the context for the drop in performance was clearly understood, the Council would continue to monitor and manage the situation, taking remedial action where necessary and in line with the priorities of the Council during its transitional year.

In addition, Officers on the Workstreams were working to ensure that the new Council was fully informed of the key performance issues so that the new Cabinet Members were aware of the situation within the Districts and how this affected the county-wide picture.

The Committee discussed the information provided and Members were pleased with the overall progress that had been made.

In response to a question in relation to NI 158 percentage of non-decent homes, which showed a rise of 1% from the year end, M Readman advised that despite the improvements that had been made to properties, in order to bring the housing stock up to Decent Homes standard considerable investment was needed. East Durham Homes needed to achieve two/three star status in the

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next Inspection in June 2009 in order to secure the funding required for the Decent Homes Programme.

In relation to NI 160 local authority tenants satisfaction with landlord services, she advised that this related to Council owned tenancies only and was measured through a national survey. It was pleasing that the results of the 2008/9 survey showed that the Council had achieved its highest rate of satisfaction ever with 78.9% of tenants satisfied with the overall housing service.

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

JE/CB/COM/AUDIT/090201
16 February 2009