Progress of Recommendations from Audit Commission Publications as at 3/12/02

Publication Title	Recommendations/Checklists	Progress
It's a Small World – a review of progress in environmental stewardship **Responsible Officer:** **Corporate Policy** **Manager** November 1999	This is an update of an original report published in 1997, which recommended that councils should develop a strategic approach towards environmental stewardship and delivering measurable environmental gains. Although there have been many improvements authorities now need to: ➢ Review their progress and performance. ➢ Identify areas where action needs to be taken. ➢ Develop and implement an action plan.	The LA21 strategy was approved by Council on 24th October 2000. Due to the LA21 Officer leaving the authority in September 2000, the implementation and monitoring associated with the strategy has yet to be fully put in place *The LA21 Strategy will be incorporated into the new Community Strategy. Aiming to produce a draft Community Strategy by March 2003.*

10.4

Publication Title	Recommendations/Checklists	Progress
A Step in the Right Direction – lessons from best value performance plans. **Responsible Officers:** **Audit & Process Review Manager** **All Heads of Service** February 2001	This report analyses the first universal evidence of the progress and impact of the best value approach, and identifies recommendations for best value authorities: ➢ Move to a single planning, action and review cycle that incorporates budget planning and any changes flowing from the introduction of best value. ➢ Ensure that the new duties to review political arrangements and to introduce community planning are integrated with best value from the start. ➢ Produce plans and summaries targeted at, and appropriate to, agreed audiences, using a variety of media to publicise the council's work. ➢ Revisit review programmes, especially to: - Combine or repackage some smaller reviews to ensure that the resources invested are more likely to address the big issues and to result in significant improvement; - Direct resources to where they can have the most impact on the local area and the lives of local people; - Identify opportunities for closer working with neighbouring, two-tier or three-tier authorities; - Amend local priorities in the light of the priorities emerging from wider community planning activity; - Ensure that mechanisms exist for completing reviews promptly and adopting and implementing proposals that are tied into existing budget and service review cycles; - Move on from considering how to conduct reviews to concentrating on how to use the results of reviews to implement change and deliver improved local services.	3 year budgetary programme and annual budgetary process in place. New political structure *has incorporated* responsibilities in connection with best value and community planning. This is on-going. Amended 5-year programme approved, but may require further adjustment in light of *the work around the CPA.* Resource implications key part of the review process. This is considered as part of each review. Too early in community planning process for this at present. Re-scheduled reviews in light of resource issues. Tied into work around overall 5-year programme. Continuous learning package. *DELETE*

10.5

Publication Title	Recommendations/Checklists	Progress
Think Piece – a new framework of financial reporting and accountability **Responsible Officer: Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)** October 2001	The second in a series of papers issued by the Audit Commission to stimulate debate and discussion about topical public sector issues. The objectives of this paper are: • to simulate debate on the strengths and weaknesses of the current framework of financial reporting and accountability in local government. • to suggest a number of opinions for change and invite comments from stakeholders on these options • to achieve a consensus on the changes needed to make the accountability framework more relevant to the needs of stakeholders.	Developing a new Corporate Governance strategy to come into effect on 01/04/02. These types of issues will be considered in developing the strategy. *Corporate Governance Strategies adopted. Annual review will require Council to ensure accounting procedures reflect best practice.* *Proposed new Accounts and Audit Regulations will also deal with these issues* *DELETE*
Building for the Future – the management of procurement under the private finance initiative **Responsible Officer: Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)** October 2001	This management paper draws out some useful lessons from schemes that have reached contract closure and considers the practical project management issues that are raised by PFI procurement. During the study several common themes emerged from discussions with project managers and external advisers: • have a clear and consistent vision of the desired service outcomes; • assemble a good project team and resource it properly; • use professional advisors well; and • use the accumulated knowledge and experience of other purchasers where possible.	Developing a new Corporate Governance strategy to come into effect on 01/04/02. These types of issues will be considered in developing the strategy *Corporate Governance Strategies agreed. Procurement Strategies agreed. Unlikely that Council will be involved in PFI but if that issue arises any guidance available at the time will be utilised.* *DELETE*

Publication Title	Recommendations/Checklists	Progress
Change Here! – managing change to improve local services **Responsible Officers:** **All Heads of Service** **Audit and Process** **Review Manager** October 2001	A range of case studies showing how organisations have improved their performance in very different circumstances. Key points: • change management is one of the greatest challenges facing local public service leadership • effective leadership is key to delivering change • building support for change is essential for continuous improvement in a changing world • real change requires sustaining focus on the key priorities • to deliver their full potential, change programmes need to begin and end with customers • strong project management is needed to deliver durable change • external input can contribute to making change happen • step-change can be used to build the capacity for continuous improvement.	*Comprehensive Performance Assessment is now being introduced. Guidance for DCs is awaited. Over the next few months, officers will start the work involved in the process.* *DELETE*

10.6

10.7

Publication Title	Recommendations/Checklists	Progress
Your Business at Risk – an update on IT abuse 2001 ***Responsible Officers:*** ***IT Client Manager*** *January 2002*	A report based on the responses to the Audit Commission's questionnaire on IT abuse, together with case studies and a checklist of good practices: Business disruption as a result of - Virus infection - Hacking - Sabotage Reputational damage as a result of - Accessing unsuitable material - Unlicensed software - Misuse of personal data - Breach of the law Financial loss as a result of - Fraud - Private work - Theft Loss of user confidence	***Business disruption:*** *- Norton Anti-virus installed on all PCs and servers, plus firewall. All incoming and outgoing e-mails scanned for viruses.* *- personal user names and a system of passwords exist to prevent hacking* *- all entrances to Council property have coded door locks; amendments to systems need IT Client Manager's authorisation; backups taken daily; revised IT Security Policy due end of 2002; Business Continuity Plan currently being devised.* ***Reputational damage:*** *- Firewall with anti porn and anti spam software.* *- software audit currently being carried out by IT section.* *- PCs are timed out and screen savers password protected; users do not have access to systems utilities; comprehensive Data Protection in place.* ***Financial Loss*** *- under review by Fraud section; clear and stringent access control policy in place.* *- Policy on secondary employment in place* *- coded door locks and intruder alarms; user names and passwords; software originals kept by IT contractors; hardware security marked.* ***Loss of user confidence*** *- IT Security Policy will support this; inventories of all hardware assets maintained by IT Contractor and IT Client Manager; the Council currently has no web based payments.* *DELETE*

10.8

Publication Title	Recommendations/Checklists	Progress
Who audits the auditors? **Responsible Officers:** **Audit and Process** **Review Managers** *January 2002*	This publication provides the answer to the question, 'Who audits the auditors?' by explaining the Audit Commission's annual quality review process (QRP). It also gives a number of further steps that officers and members can take to get the most out of the quality review process: 1. Review with the external auditors their plans to implement improvements locally. 2. Make sure the Audit Commission knows the council's views on the audit regime within which its audit suppliers work by responding to the discussion papers circulated on topical issues and other consultation papers. 3. Take part in the QRP audited body questionnaire survey. 4. Take the opportunity to help the Commission develop the QRP if contacted. 5. Send comments on the external auditors performance at any time to the Director of Audit Policy and Appointments 6. Review with the external auditors their plans to implement improvements locally. 7. Make sure the Audit Commission knows the council's views on the audit regime within which its audit suppliers work by responding to the discussion papers circulated on topical issues and other consultation papers. 8. Take part in the QRP audited body questionnaire survey. 9. Take the opportunity to help the Commission develop the QRP if contacted. 10. Send comments on the external auditors performance at any time to the Director of Audit Policy and Appointments	*RDC has the Managed Audit status with External Audit.* *As an authority where ever possible we respond to consultation documents.* *All Audit Commission Publications are considered and reported to committee when appropriate.* *DELETE*