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**Audit Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2006**

**Report of the Director of Finance**

**Auditor's Annual Governance Report 2005/06**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To present the auditor's first Annual Governance Report to the Audit Committee for consideration and approval, and to invite the Audit Committee to approve the formal Letter of Representation to the Auditor.

**Background**

2. As reported at the June meeting of this Committee, the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice 2005 includes a new requirement for external auditors to report to those charged with governance on the results of their work. The Council has delegated the responsibility for the approval of the Statement of Accounts, and all audit matters, to the Audit Committee.
3. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 formalised the responsibility of members of local authorities for the adequacy of financial management.
4. Towards the end of each audit of the annual accounts, the Director of Finance provides a letter of representation (sometimes known as a management letter or letter of comfort), confirming the completeness and reliability of the information and records supplied to the auditors. The Audit Commission have requested that this letter should also be signed by the Chair of this meeting, to evidence members' acknowledgment of responsibility for financial management.

**Annual Governance Report 2005**

5. The Report is attached, and will be presented by the District Auditor, Mr John Gregory. It includes findings from the audit of the 2005/06 accounts, and opinions on the Council's arrangements for securing value for money.

**Finance**

6. This report refers to various aspects of financial management, but does not give rise to any direct costs.

**Law**

7. Legislation appertaining to Local Authority Audit and Accounts is contained in the Local Government Act 1972, part 2 of the Audit Commission Act, 1998, and regulations made thereunder.

## **Equality Impact**

8. The proposal takes account of the Council's policy in relation to equal opportunities.
9. With regard to children and young people:
  - There is no direct effect of the proposals on children and young people.
  - There has been no specific consultation with children and young people.
  - There has been no direct involvement of children and young people in developing the proposals.

## **Recommendation**

10. It is recommended that:-
  - The Committee considers the Annual Governance Report, and the auditor's comments.
  - The Committee approves the Letter of Representation.
  - The Chair of the Committee signs and dates the Letter of Representation to give evidence of the approval above.



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**Mike Williams**  
**Director of Finance**

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