

2007-08 Assurance Statement

Manager of Resource Services

As the provider of the internal audit service to Gedling Borough Council we are required to provide the Council with assurance on the whole system of internal control. In providing our opinion it should be noted that the level of assurance given can never be absolute. The internal audit service can only provide reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes.

Internal Audit's overall assurance statement is provided below:

Internal Audit are satisfied that sufficient internal audit activity has been undertaken to allow us to draw a reasonable conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of Gedling Borough Council's risk management, governance and control processes.

It is internal audits opinion that, for the 12 months ending 31st March 2008, Gedling Borough Council has adequate and effective risk management, control and governance processes to manage and achieve the organisations objectives.

The internal audit statement is further evidenced by external evaluators such as CPA inspection, the Use of Resources assessment, the Audit Commissions annual audit and inspection letter and other inspectorate reports such as the Planning Inspectorate.

During the 2007-08 financial year the following issues were identified via the Authorities risk management, governance and internal control processes as being relevant to preparation of the Annual Governance Statement:

- **Register of Interests** - recommendations relating to the development of an Authority wide Register of Interests for Employee's have been addressed with the development of a policy. Once approved this will be rolled out across the authority with supporting guidelines.
- **Business Continuity Plan** - has been reviewed and updated. Resource requirements for all critical systems have been identified and a Disaster Recovery plan developed. A contract has been entered into with a third party supplier and neighbouring authorities to provide contingency arrangements. The contract includes the provision of an annual test of the recovery arrangements, with the first live test to be undertaken during quarter 2 of 2008-09.

- **LSVT** – following the comprehensive positive vote by the residents, a transfer date for November 2008 has been set. The authority will need to ensure it manages the benefits accruing from the transfer through effective cost absorption.
- **Partnership Risk** – the authority has identified its key partnerships and undertaken a risk assessment of these as part of its Risk Management process. The ongoing development of a formal partnership risk register will further enhance the governance arrangements associated with these.
- **Data Security** – recent high profile and well-publicised incidents of data loss and breaches has significantly raised awareness and concerns of data security issues. Whilst the authority has not experienced any significant data breaches, a Data Security Working Group has been established with the key objective of undertaking a thorough review of data security arrangements to provide assurance to members and officers that procedures are adequate and effective.

Action plans have been formulated to address the weaknesses identified and, once action has been fully implemented, will ensure that controls associated are adequate and operate effectively.

Internal Audit will monitor the progress of the action plans and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in addressing the issues identified.

This statement is provided to the best of my knowledge.

Mr V Rimmington
Manager of Resource Services
Gedling Borough Council
May 2008