

**Action Plan and Progress Against Recommendations Made in AAIL March 2006**

<b>Action needed by the Council</b>	<b>Response and progress to date, as at 30 March 2006</b>
<p>Continue to develop the focus of its work on its customers by implementing the recommendations in the (Customer Focus) inspection report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The actions arising from the Customer Focus Inspection are being taken forward and linked in with the CPA Improvement Plan.</li> </ul> <p>Key improvements already made include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An agreed vision for Customer Focus.</li> <li>• Agreed and published corporate performance standards (our Customer Services Charter).</li> <li>• The Customer First partnership has made a formal response back to the Audit Commission setting out progress, and its further plans to align performance standards and access strategies across Wiltshire.</li> <li>• Achievement of Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.</li> <li>• Customer Contact Team recommended for Customer Charter Mark status.</li> </ul>
<p>As part of the review of the constitution the Council should establish an independent audit committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be addressed by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May 2006. It is intended to create an Audit and Accounts Committee which will fulfil the role of an Audit Committee and also be the body that approves the Council's final accounts.</li> </ul>
<p>Consider how best the new head of internal audit can be given the required resources and support to ensure an internal audit function is established that can demonstrate full compliance with the internal audit code</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment to the second audit post is in progress.</li> <li>• The internal audit plan should ensure full compliance with the internal audit code from 2006/07 onwards.</li> </ul>

Action needed by the Council	Response and progress to date, as at 30 March 2006
<p>Closely monitor the effectiveness of arrears collection arrangements in revenues and benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular updates on performance against Best Value Performance Indicators are made to the Finance and Performance Monitoring Sub Committee.</li> <li>• Collection rates have improved by the end of February 2006, showing that for National Non Domestic Rates, the rate of collection is higher than at the same time in 2004/05 and the rate of collection for Council Tax is comparable with the same period last year.</li> <li>• An action plan is being developed to address the current level of arrears.</li> </ul>
<p>Introduce an internal document management system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is being addressed through the ICE (Improving the Customer Experience) Programme. One of the projects already outlined within the Programme is the introduction of a Document Management System. In advance of any decisions being made about a document management system, the officers' Information Management Group have set out a workplan that needs to be followed to determine what we actually need to achieve, to ensure records management complies with ISO15489. This will, in effect, provide for improved records management (e.g. a central repository for all policy and strategy documents) meeting the requirements of this recommendation. The ICE project will extend this work further.</li> </ul>

Action needed by the Council	Response and progress to date, as at 30 March 2006
<p>Develop an action plan to address the improvement areas identified in our recent Use of Resources report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Finance Improvement Plan is in place (this was reported to Council alongside the revision of the Financial Regulations on 31 January 2006). This improvement plan will be updated in view of the Use of Resources assessment issued by the Audit Commission and is being built into the Finance Team Business Plan for 2006/07. Progress updates on this detailed action plan will be made – as appropriate – to the Finance and Performance Monitoring Sub Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Key improvements have already taken place, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of Asset Management Strategy (and Plan) by Executive on 9 March 2006.</li> <li>• Capital Strategy is on target to be approved in May 2006.</li> <li>• Financial Regulations revised and awareness sessions run for managers.</li> <li>• The Audit Commission ran a Financial Management workshop in March 2006. This will result in an action plan.</li> <li>• Risk management training sessions carried out for members and officers in January, February and March 2006.</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register and risk management process reviewed and improved.</li> <li>• Budgets for 2006/07 loaded onto the Ledger system for the start of the new financial year.</li> </ul>