

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT &  
SUPPORT  
TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE  
15 JANUARY 2008**

**Audit Commission Report – Next Steps in Securing Improvement**

**1.0 Introduction and Report Summary**

- 1.1 The Council has been pursuing a programme of substantial change since its last Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004. Since the Audit Commission's last Securing Improvement Report of April 2006, the Council has continued to invest in a programme of Organisational Development. In the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter of March 2007, the Audit Commission reported that the Council had been working to improve its managerial capacity.
- 1.2 The attached report at Appendix A provides more depth to that audit letter and assesses progress and impact up to May 2007, making recommendations for continued improvement.
- 1.3 The completed action plan contained within the Audit Commission's report at Appendix A, was agreed with the Audit Commission in December 2007 and is shown separately at Appendix B.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the evidence gathering for this report in terms of document reviews and interviews with managers, staff and councillors took place between January and May 2007. Therefore, many of the issues raised in this report have moved on considerably.
- 1.5 The contact officer for this report is Helen Bishop, Deputy Director (Organisational Development and Support), telephone 01235 540372. **Email address** **helen.bishop@whitehorsedc.gov.uk**.

**2.0 Recommendations**

*The Committee is asked to consider the Audit Commission's "Next Steps in Securing Improvement" report and agree the associated action plan for implementation.*

**3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies**

This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports objectives A, D and E. The report does not conflict with any Council Strategies.

**4.0 Next Steps**

- 4.1 The Securing Improvement Report was always intended by the Audit Commission to be a two stage piece of work. As this report is the second of those stages, progress with the actions contained within this report will be followed up by the Audit

Commission as part of the annual Direction of Travel assessment scheduled for December 2008.

- 4.2 In addition, the actions will be included within the Vale's Corporate Governance Report, which will assist officers in ensuring and monitoring their implementation.

HELEN BISHOP  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT)