

**REPORT TO: PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE –
1 MARCH 2010**

REPORT BY: CLERK TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

PORTCHESTER CREMATORIUM PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE

Purpose

1. To report the outcome of an audit of 'Partnership Governance', undertaken by Fareham BC's Internal Audit Group, as part of the audit periodic plan for 2009/10, and make recommendations accordingly.

Recommendations

That the recommendations set out in Section 9 of this report be approved as the response to the Audit Report.

Background

2. The specific risk considered as part of the audit focussed on partnership governance and was related to ensuring that accountability aspects are clearly documented and there are adequate monitoring arrangements in place.
3. The audit reviewed the adequacy and application of the controls already in place to mitigate the risk identified.

The Audit's Conclusions

4. In section 1.3, the Audit Report concludes –

Taking account of the issues identified, in our opinion the Joint Committee can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this area, as currently laid down and operated, are effective. This equates to the Fareham Borough Council overall audit grade of Very Good.

5. This section of the report also sets out examples of good controls that are already in place.

Audit Action Plan

6. Arising from the audit, two issues were identified for action. These are set out in section 2 of the report, and are as follows –

- The Joint Committee should document and approve responsibilities regarding the monitoring of contracts (standards, quality etc);
- Responsibilities regarding the authorisation process should be documented and reported to the Joint Committee for approval.
(This is a reference to the scheme of officer delegations approved in June 2006. The audit report suggests that this should also be referred to within the Memorandum of Agreement)

Response to the Audit Action Plan

7. To meet the recommendations, I have previously considered whether the Memorandum of Agreement between the 4 authorities should be revised. I have concluded that the matters identified can and should be dealt with by decisions taken by the Joint Committee, without the need to amend the Agreement. In this way the Joint Committee's decisions are then placed on record for ease of future reference.
8. It must be remembered that the Agreement is a framework document identifying the key components for operation of the agreement, including membership, financial arrangements and termination.
9. From time to time there will be new obligations arising – both legislative and administrative/best practice that have not been specifically mentioned within the Agreement but which will require the Joint Committee to take decisions and put in place particular arrangements. In my view these recommendations arising from the Audit Review fall into that category, and I therefore recommend they are dealt with as follows –

	Recommendations	Notes
(a)	<p>In the Joint Committee's Standing Orders in respect of contracts, add the following as Section 9 –</p> <p><i>Monitoring of Contracts</i></p> <p>The Responsible Officer shall monitor the expenditure, standards, quality and performance of any contract for which s/he is responsible, and submit to the Joint Committee a report in respect of any matter that may require attention, or as otherwise directed by the Committee.</p>	<p>The same wording to be added to the list of officer delegations as item A21</p>
(b)	<p>That it be placed on record that the Joint Committee's general powers and duties under Section 214 of the Local Government Act 1972 and any other relevant legislation, as referred to in Clause 4 of the Memorandum of Agreement includes but is not limited to the making of standing orders relating to tenders,</p>	

	contracts, financial matters, staffing, and schemes delegating powers, duties and functions to officers either generally or specifically.	
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John Haskell
Clerk to the Joint Committee

**Background List of Documents –
Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 :**

Fareham Borough Council Internal Audit report No. 834

JH/me
18 February 2010