

Audit Committee – 22nd April 2010

## 7. Partnership Governance with East Devon District Council

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### Purpose of the Report

This report outlines a way forward for the Audit Committee in meeting the requirements approved by Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010 in its role in monitoring governance as our partnership with East Devon District Council progresses.

### Recommendation

The Audit Committee is recommended to note the role and way forward for the Audit Committee.

### Introduction

A Joint Integration Committee has been set up to oversee and make recommendations on how South Somerset District Council and East Devon District Council can work together. At the Full Council meeting on the 25th February 2010 members also accepted the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee including the following;

“It should be the responsibility of the Audit function of both authorities to monitor:

- Proceedings regarding each authority’s governance framework to check that there are no clashes/impact;
- The progress of achieving projected savings and report exceptions to the Scrutiny Committee”.

(Please note that this recommendation in effect can only be applied at SSDC as it is an SSDC resolution).

### A Way Forward

South Somerset does have additional unallocated days within its Audit Plan with the South West Audit Partnership for 2010/11. In discussions with the Group Auditor some of these days have been retained to enable a partnership audit to take place depending on how far both authorities progress with joint working. The findings once completed will be reported to the Audit Committee.

The Joint Integration Committee is a non-decision making body. Its primary role is to produce a Joint Integration Strategy/Work Plan. The committee will also ensure that an action plan details all aspects of the proposed integration that will take place including timescales, responsibilities and costs.

The Joint Integration Committee will recommend any changes that have a constitutional impact to the Audit Committee for consideration. This would include changes that affected:

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- The Constitution including the scheme of delegation;
- HR Procedure Rules;
- Finance Procedure Rules;
- Procurement Procedure Rules.

The first Joint Integration Committee meeting took place on the 8th April 2010 and from this meeting a series of 16 work streams have been agreed to look at possible sharing options between the two authorities. Each work stream will need to assess the most appropriate option for each service area:

- 1) A joint manager and a single team;
- 2) One manager supervising two separate teams;
- 3) Separate managers running two separate teams;
- 4) Alternative option reflecting existing contractual commitments or other considerations.

Each of the work streams have a lead officer attached from each authority and must report back to the Joint Integration Committee on the 17th June 2010. A Section 113 Agreement is already in place outlining the protocol and cost sharing mechanism for the Chief Executive.

## **Financial Implications**

None.

**Background Papers:** *Scrutiny Committee Agenda and Minutes - 9th February 2010*  
*Council Agenda and Minutes - 25th February 2010*  
*Joint Integration Committee Terms of Reference*  
*Joint Integration Committee - 8th April 2010*  
*S113 Agreement*

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