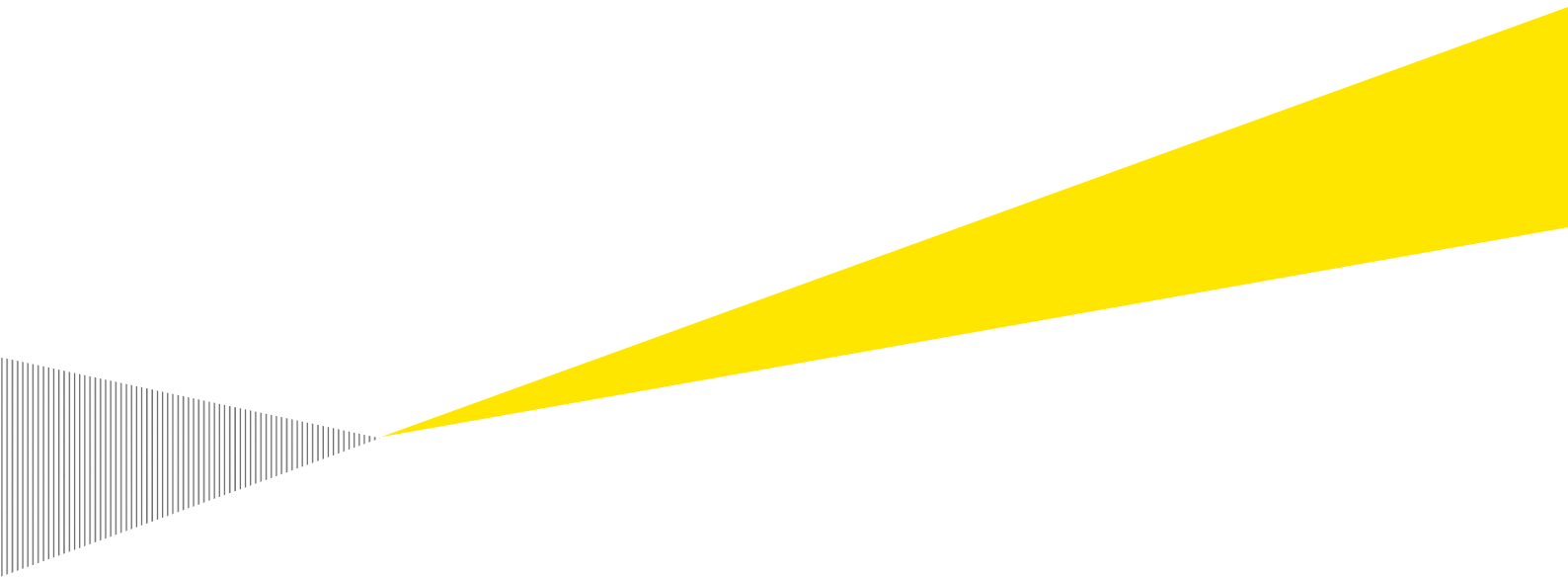


Hampshire County Council

Year ending 31 March 2013

Annual Audit Letter

October 2013



Building a better
working world

The Members
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8UB

29 October 2013

Dear Members,

Annual Audit Letter

The purpose of this Annual Audit Letter is to communicate to the Members of Hampshire County Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work, which we consider should be brought to their attention.

We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work to those charged with governance of Hampshire County Council in the following reports:

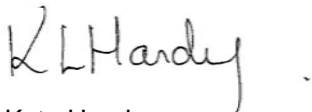
2012/13 Audit results report for Hampshire County Council Issued 26 September 2013

2012/13 Audit results report for the Hampshire Pension Fund Issued 26 September 2013

The matters reported here are the most significant for the Authority.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of Hampshire County Council for their assistance during the course of our work.

Yours faithfully



Kate Handy
Director
For and behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
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In March 2010 the Audit Commission issued a revised version of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' (Statement of responsibilities). It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the [Audit Commission's website](#).

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the Audit Commission's appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The Standing Guidance serves as our terms of appointment as auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. The Standing Guidance sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2010 (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Audit Results Report is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

1. Executive summary

Our 2012/13 audit work has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan we issued on 27 June 2013 and is conducted in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

The Authority is responsible for preparing and publishing its Statement of Accounts, accompanied by the Annual Governance Statement. In the Annual Governance Statement, the Authority reports publicly on an annual basis on the extent to which it complies with its own code of governance, including how it has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. The Authority is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

As auditors we are responsible for:

- ▶ forming an opinion on the financial statements;
- ▶ reviewing the Annual Governance Statement;
- ▶ forming a conclusion on the arrangements that the Authority has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- ▶ undertaking any other work specified by the Audit Commission.

Summarised below are the conclusions from all elements of our work:

Audit the financial statements of Hampshire County Council and its Pension Fund for the financial year ended 31 March 2013 in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK&I)	On 30 September 2013 we issued an unqualified audit opinion for the Authority. On 30 September 2013 we issued an unqualified audit opinion for the Pension Fund.
Form a conclusion on the arrangements the Authority has made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.	On 30 September 2013 we issued an unqualified value for money conclusion.
Issue a report to those charged with governance of the Authority (the Audit Committee) communicating significant findings resulting from our audit.	On 26 September 2013 we issued our report for the Authority. On 26 September 2013 we issued our report for the Pension Fund.
Report to the National Audit Office on the accuracy of the consolidation pack the Authority is required to prepare for the Whole of Government Accounts.	We reported our findings to the National Audit Office on 3 October 2013.
Consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work and consider whether it complies with CIPFA / SOLACE guidance.	No issues to report.
Consider whether, in the public interest, we should make a report on any matter coming to our notice in the course of the audit.	No issues to report.
Determine whether any other action should be taken in relation to our responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act.	No issues to report.
Issue a certificate that we have completed the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Practice issued by the Audit Commission.	On 3 October 2013 we issued our audit completion certificate.
Issue a report to those charged with governance of the Authority summarising the certification (of grants claims and returns) work that we have undertaken.	We expect to issue our annual certification report to those charged with governance for the 2012/13 financial year in December 2013.

2. Key findings

2.1 Financial statement audit

We audited the Authority's Statement of Accounts in line with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission. We issued an unqualified audit report on 30 September 2013.

Our main findings in relation to the areas of risk included in our Audit Plan are set out below.

Risks:

Valuation of academy schools:

Issue:

- ▶ In 2011/12 the Council needed to obtain a revaluation of land for newly converted academy schools, impacting on its draft accounts.

Finding:

- ▶ We concluded that the correct accounting treatment for the transfer of academy schools was applied in the preparation of the 2012/13 financial statements.
-

Risk of misstatement due to fraud and error:

Issue:

- ▶ Our responsibility is to plan and perform audits to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements whether caused by error or fraud. We approach each engagement with a questioning mind accepting the possibility that a material misstatement due to fraud may occur, and we design appropriate procedures to consider such risks

Finding:

- ▶ We carried out the procedures highlighted in our Audit Plan, and had no findings to report.
-

Our audit of Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Pension Fund did not identify any significant misstatements in the financial statements presented for audit. A small number of amendments were made following the audit and the final financial statements were approved by the Audit Committee. None of the amendments impacted on the Council's reserves.

2.2 Value for money conclusion

We are required to carry out sufficient work to conclude on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

In accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission, in 2012/13 our conclusion was based on two criteria:

- ▶ The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience; and
- ▶ The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 30 September 2013. We reported that:

- ▶ The Council established a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy to support a sustainable budget. There are effective monitoring arrangements and budgets are being delivered.
- ▶ Looking forward the level of financial challenge is increasing with significant additional savings required in the medium term. The Council has arrangements in place to develop sustainable solutions to deliver the required savings and a sound level of reserves to mitigate changes in the financial environment and to facilitate the continued implementation of the transformation agenda.
- ▶ The Council continues to demonstrate it is low cost and performing well against its own corporate priorities, as well as comparatively against other local authorities.
- ▶ Corporate planning is supported by a robust system of risk management. Resources and savings targets are linked to corporate priorities. Performance monitoring is effective and there is a sustained culture of challenging how the Council operates and delivers services in order to secure efficiencies and deliver improvements.

2.3 Whole of government accounts

We reported to the National Audit office on 3 October 2013 the results of our work performed in relation to the accuracy of the consolidation pack the Authority is required to prepare for the whole of government accounts. Overall the consolidation pack was consistent with Authority's financial statements, our work identified a small number of disclosure amendments which officers agreed to make.

2.5 Annual governance statement

We are required to consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work, and consider whether it complies with CIPFA / SOLACE guidance. We completed this work and did not identify any areas of concern.

2.6 Certification of grants claims and returns

We expect to issue the Annual Certification Report for 2012/13 in December 2013.

2.7 Control themes and observations

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we communicate to those charged with governance at the Authority, as required, significant deficiencies in internal control.

We did not identify any significant weakness in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material error in your financial statements.

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