

Torbay Council

Reports issued by the Audit Commission since last meeting

- Unqualified opinion on the 2010/11 accounts and unqualified VFM conclusion issued 29/9/11
- Unqualified Whole of Government Accounts return certified 30/9/11
- Annual audit letter 2010/11 (attached)
- Audit of systems controls and financial statements 2010/11 (attached)

Work completed since last meeting

- Grant claim audits

Work in progress

- Detailed planning and initial work for 2011/12 audit.

Audit Commission events and national reports

- October 2011 – The AC has invited tenders from 13 potential bidders to carry out the outsourced audit of local government (including Torbay Council) in 10 lots for a period of 3 or 5 years from 2012/13. The AC's Chief Executive wrote to audited bodies on 10th November, updating them on procurement progress.
- October 2011 – The AC confirmed that it intends to deliver final accounts workshops for clients early in 2012. The workshops will be run on a similar basis to previous years and will run from mid-January to the end of February. Invitations will be sent in due course.
- November 2011 – The AC published *Protecting the Public Purse 2011 – Fighting Fraud against Local Government*. This is a summary of what has happened in the field of fraud detection and prevention since 2010, including the findings from our latest fraud survey. The report concludes that:
 - housing tenancy fraud could cost the public purse £900 million each year;
 - councils detected more than £22 million of false claims for student and single person council tax discounts;
 - housing and council tax benefits fraud losses accounted for more than half of the total fraud losses detected by councils;
 - counter-fraud professionals increasingly recognise abuse of personal budgets in adult social care as a fraud risk for councils; and
 - councils detected 145 cases of procurement fraud amounting to £14.6 million.

The report contains a checklist for audit committees (attached) and the AC has also provided a comparator tool for single person discount (SPD) that allows local authorities to compare their levels of SPD with predicted levels, based on a national average. Two other briefing documents are available for councillors in parish & town councils and for governors in schools.

- November 2011 – The AC published *Tough Times*, a report drawing on a survey of auditors and a new analysis of councils' budget data. It finds that most councils are managing well in the face of unprecedented reductions to their income, but services have been affected and a small number of councils may struggle to balance their books. Although councils face a real terms loss of total income of £4.7 billion (7.5 per cent) this financial year (2011/12), auditors felt nine out of ten councils are well prepared for this and will deliver their budgets.

Documents relating to the above are available from the Audit Commission website.

Steve Brown

Audit Manager

Audit Practice

29 November 2011

www.audit-commission.gov.uk