

The Audit Findings for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Year ended 31 March 2015

4 September 2015

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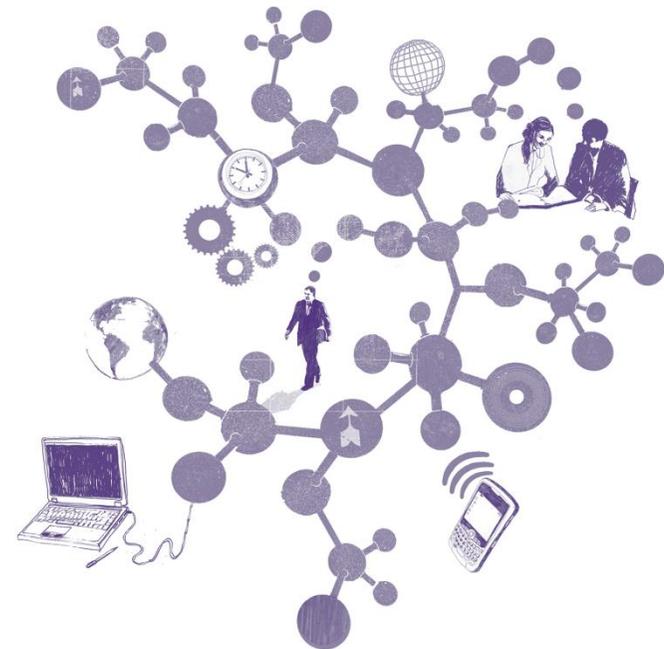
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Audit Findings for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for the year ending 31 March 2015

This Audit Findings report highlights the significant findings arising from the audit for the benefit of those charged with governance (in the case of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, the Strategy and Resources Committee), as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260. Its contents have been discussed with management.

As auditors we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland), which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements.

The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed primarily for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements. Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose defalcations or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the kind assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

Yours sincerely

Christian Heeger

Chartered Accountants

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Section 1: Executive summary

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Executive summary

Purpose of this report

This report highlights the key matters arising from our audit of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's (the Council) financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015. It is also used to report our audit findings to management and those charged with governance in accordance with the requirements of International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA UK&I).

Under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice we are required to report whether, in our opinion, the Council's financial statements present a true and fair view of the financial position and expenditure and income for the year and whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. We are also required to reach a formal conclusion on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the Value for Money conclusion).

Introduction

In the conduct of our audit we have not had to alter or change our planned audit approach, which we communicated to you in our Audit Plan dated 12 March 2015.

Our audit is substantially complete although we are finalising our work in the following areas:

- sample testing of debtor balances
- property, plant and equipment testing
- sample testing of housing benefit cases
- review of the final version of the financial statements
- obtaining and reviewing the final management letter of representation
- review of final version of the Annual Governance Statement

- updating our post balance sheet events review, to the date of signing the opinion, and
- Whole of Government Accounts.

We received draft financial statements and accompanying working papers at the start of our audit, in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Key issues arising from our audit

Financial statements opinion

We anticipate providing an unqualified opinion in respect of the financial statements.

The key messages arising from our audit of the Council's financial statements are:

- the draft accounts submitted for audit were of a high quality. The Council de-cluttered the accounts during the year which made them easier to understand for the reader of the accounts
- officers were responsive to audit requests for information.

We have identified an adjustment affecting the Council's reported financial position (details are recorded in section 2 of this report). The draft financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015 recorded net expenditure of £8,353k; the audited financial statements show net expenditure of £9,052k. This change relates to the classification of three grants in the draft accounts as credited to cost of services instead of taxation and non-specific grant income. The surplus on provision of services is the same in both sets of accounts.

We have also identified a small number of adjustments to improve the presentation of the financial statements. Further details are set out in section two of this report.

Value for Money conclusion

We are pleased to report that, based on our review of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, we propose to give an unqualified VfM conclusion.

Further detail of our work on Value for Money is set out in section three of this report.

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

We will complete our work in respect of the Whole of Government Accounts in accordance with the national timetable.

Controls

Roles and responsibilities

The Council's management is responsible for the identification, assessment, management and monitoring of risk, and for developing, operating and monitoring the system of internal control.

Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we report these to the Council.

Findings

Our work has not identified any control weaknesses which we wish to highlight for your attention.

Further details are provided within section two of this report.

The way forward

Matters arising from the financial statements audit and review of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources have been discussed with the Director of Finance and Resources and finance team.

Acknowledgment

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

Grant Thornton UK LLP
September 2015

Section 2: Audit findings

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Audit findings

In this section we present our findings in respect of matters and risks identified at the planning stage of the audit and additional matters that arose during the course of our work. We set out on the following pages the work we have performed and the findings arising from our work in respect of the audit risks we identified in our audit plan, presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 24 June 2015. We also set out the adjustments to the financial statements arising from our audit work and our findings in respect of internal controls.

Changes to Audit Plan

We have not made any changes to our Audit Plan as previously communicated to you.

Audit opinion

Our proposed audit opinion is set out in Appendix B.

Audit findings against significant risks

"Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, either due to size or nature, and that therefore occur infrequently. Judgmental matters may include the development of accounting estimates for which there is significant measurement uncertainty" (ISA (UK&I) 315).

In this section we detail our response to the significant risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. As we noted in our plan, there are two presumed significant risks which are applicable to all audits under auditing standards.

	Risks identified in our audit plan	Work completed	Assurance gained and issues arising
1.	<p>Improper revenue recognition</p> <p>Under ISA (UK&I) 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper recognition.</p> <p>This presumption can be rebutted if the auditor concludes that there is no risk of material misstatement due to fraud relating to revenue recognition.</p> <p>Although we have rebutted the significant risk presumption we are required to and have performed audit tests to address the inherent risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and testing of revenue recognition policies • testing of material revenue streams • review of unusual significant transactions 	<p>We determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition could be rebutted.</p> <p>Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of revenue recognition.</p>
2.	<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>Under ISA (UK&I) 240 there is a presumed risk of management over-ride of controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of accounting estimates, judgements and decisions made by management • testing of journal entries • review of unusual significant transactions 	<p>Our audit work has not identified any evidence of management override of controls. In particular the findings of our review of journal controls and testing of journal entries has not identified any significant issues.</p> <p>We set out later in this section of the report our work and findings on key accounting estimates and judgments.</p>

Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
Operating expenses	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess the whether those controls were in line with our documented understanding Sample testing of expenditure during the financial year Testing of year end payables Testing for unrecorded liabilities 	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration accrual understated	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess the whether those controls were in line with our documented understanding Completeness testing of payroll records using trend analysis Sample testing of payroll transactions to payslips and HR contracts of employment Reconciliation of payroll gross to net report 	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.
Welfare expenditure	Welfare benefit expenditure improperly computed	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documented our understanding of processes and key controls over the transaction cycle undertaken walkthrough of the key controls to assess the whether those controls were in line with our documented understanding HB COUNT audit work, including testing of housing benefit cases 	<p>Our audit work to date has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.</p> <p>Testing of the housing benefit cases is still in progress. No errors have been identified in the cases completed to date.</p>

Accounting policies, estimates & judgements

In this section we report on our consideration of accounting policies, in particular revenue recognition policies, and key estimates and judgements made and included with the Council's financial statements.

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
Revenue recognition	<p>Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.</p> <p>The Council also has separate policies for the recognition and measurement of council tax and business rates revenue.</p>	<p>The Council's policy follows the revenue recognition policy in the Guidance Notes for Practitioners and is appropriate to its circumstances.</p> <p>Separate policies for each class of revenue have been disclosed in the accounts as required in the Code with the exception of grant income. A policy for grant income has now been included in the accounting policies.</p> <p>The policies for Collection Fund revenue are appropriate to your circumstances.</p>	 Green
Estimates and judgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key estimates and judgements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • useful life of and basis of depreciation of property, plant and equipment (PPE) • pension fund valuations and settlements • PPE valuations 	<p>We have reviewed the bases of these estimates, including assessing and placing reliance where appropriate on the work of experts to inform our understanding and to gain assurance.</p> <p>The Council has enhanced the narrative in note 3 (critical judgements) for the valuation methodology of its asset base to make it clearer to the reader of the accounts the approach taken by the valuer in 2014/15.</p>	 Green

Assessment

- Marginal accounting policy which could potentially attract attention from regulators
- Accounting policy appropriate and disclosures sufficient

- Accounting policy appropriate but scope for improved disclosure

Accounting policies, estimates & judgements continued

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
Going concern	The leadership team has a reasonable expectation that the services provided by the Council will continue for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.	We have reviewed the assessment by the leadership team and are satisfied with managements' assessment that the going concern basis is appropriate for the 2014/15 financial statements.	 Green
Other accounting policies	We have reviewed the Council's policies against the requirements of the CIPFA Code and accounting standards.	Our review of accounting policies has not highlighted any issues which we wish to bring to your attention	 Green

Assessment

● Marginal accounting policy which could potentially attract attention from regulators

● Accounting policy appropriate but scope for improved disclosure

● Accounting policy appropriate and disclosures sufficient

Other communication requirements

We set out below details of other matters which we are required by auditing standards to communicate to those charged with governance.

	Issue	Commentary
1.	Matters in relation to fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Strategy and Resources Committee and no issues were brought to our attention that could impact on the audit opinion. We have not been made aware of any other incidents in the period and no other issues have been identified during the course of our audit.
2.	Matters in relation to laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are not aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
3.	Written representations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter of representation has been requested from the Council. In particular, representations will be requested from management in respect of the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates for the valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment.
4.	Disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our review found no non-trivial omissions in the financial statements.
5.	Matters in relation to related parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are not aware of any related party transactions which have not been disclosed. The draft accounts omitted the related party transactions note and this has been included in the final version of the accounts.
6.	Confirmation requests from third parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We requested from management permission to send confirmation requests to Natwest for bank, and Aberdeen Asset Management and Goldman Sachs for cash equivalent balances. This permission was granted and the requests were sent. All of these requests were returned with positive confirmation. We requested management to send letters to those solicitors who worked with the Council during the year. A response from the in-house solicitor will give us assurance required.

Internal controls

The purpose of an audit is to express an opinion on the financial statements.

Our audit included consideration of internal controls relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control. We considered and walked through the internal controls for Employee Remuneration, Operating Expenses and Welfare Expenditure as set out on page 10 above.

The controls were found to be operating effectively and we have no matters to report to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

A review of the internal control weaknesses raised in the prior year confirms that the Council has made reasonable progress in implementing the recommendations. No issues arising that need to be reported in 2014/15.

Misclassifications & disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Adjustment type	Value £'000	Account balance	Impact on the financial statements
1 Disclosure	n/a	Assumptions made about future and uncertainty (note 4)	The Property, Plant and Equipment figure of £65.8m does not agree to the Balance Sheet. The disclosure has been amended to state £64.6m.
2 Disclosure	1,218	Financial instruments (note 15)	The loans and receivables total disclosed in the note was overstated as the balance included council tax and NNDR debtors which are not a financial instrument as they are a statutory debt. The loans and receivables should total £25,035k.
3 Disclosure	n/a	Cash and Cash Equivalents (note 17)	The note has been amended to simplify the disclosure in line with the Code guidance notes. The draft accounts included a disclosure relating to long term investments which was a duplicate of the cash equivalents totals.
4 Disclosure	n/a	Related party transactions (note 31)	The related party note was removed during the de-cluttering exercise but due to its sensitive nature the Code states this is a mandatory disclosure and has been included in the final version of the accounts.

Section 3: Value for Money

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Value for Money

Value for money (VfM) conclusion

The Code of Audit Practice 2010 (the Code) describes the Council's responsibilities to put in place proper arrangements to:

- secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources;
- ensure proper stewardship and governance; and
- review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required to give our VfM conclusion based on two criteria specified by the Audit Commission which support our reporting responsibilities under the Code.

These criteria are:

The Council has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience - the Council has robust systems and processes to manage effectively financial risks and opportunities, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

The Council has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness - the Council is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.

Key findings

Securing financial resilience

We have undertaken a review which considered the Council's arrangements against the three expected characteristics of proper arrangements as defined by the Audit Commission:

- Financial governance;
- Strategic Financial planning; and
- Financial control.

Overall our work highlighted that the Council continued to deliver good financial outcomes in the increasingly difficult financial climate and had established adequate arrangements for financial planning, governance and control.

Challenging economy, efficiency and effectiveness

We have considered the Council's arrangements to challenge economy, efficiency and effectiveness against the following themes:

- Prioritising resources
- Improving efficiency & productivity

Overall our work highlighted that the Council has adequate arrangements in place to prioritise its resources and to improve efficiency and productivity.

Overall VfM conclusion

On the basis of our work, and having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission, we are satisfied that in all significant respects the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2015.

We set out below our detailed findings against six risk areas which have been used to assess the Council's performance against the Audit Commission's criteria. We summarise our assessment of each risk area using a red, amber or green (RAG) rating, based on the following definitions:

Green	Adequate arrangements
Amber	Adequate arrangements, with areas for development
Red	Inadequate arrangements

The table below and overleaf summarises our overall rating for each of the themes reviewed:

Theme	Summary findings	RAG rating
Key indicators of performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have reviewed the relevant key indicators of performance for the Council: liquidity; workforce; performance against budgets; and reserve balances. The Council has an understanding of all these areas as part of their monitoring. The financial performance indicators are monitored by members as part of the quarterly budget reports to Cabinet. This ensures that any variances are identified and appropriate action is taken. 	Green
Strategic financial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy are set out in the Four Year Financial Plan 2012-2016. The 2015/16 budget report to Council in February 2015 updated the financial forecast to 2018/19. The financial assumptions are based on a detailed assessment of inflation, income growth and demand for services and are in line with expectations of the Council's environment. There are good links between the annual financial planning and the Council's key priorities. Budget assumptions have been prudently made based on the Council's analysis of the national and local context for Surrey to establish the overall challenges the Council is facing. It also includes clear spending demands and pressures alongside the potential income generation and savings proposals. 	Green
Financial governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has established sound financial governance arrangements and members are provided with regular quarterly financial updates via email. The Financial Policy Panel has given guidance on the preparation of the estimates to be used in the 2015/16 budget as part of review of the financial base position in 2014/15 and the impact on the future years. Members are engaged in the financial planning and monitoring process and have an awareness of the financial environment the Council is operating in. However, they face difficult decisions in the future about service delivery and capital projects as the budget savings become increasingly difficult to identify. The Council has restructured its corporate management team and needs to ensure additional support is given to the Heads of Service over the 2015/16 year as they now play a prominent role in delivering the savings. 	Green

Theme	Summary findings	RAG rating
Financial control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a strong track record on budgetary and financial control, demonstrated by good financial outcomes, and which is indicative of a robust financial control framework. The outturn report for 2014/15 showed an adverse variance of £84k against the planned budget. This is 1% of the total funding for the year and is not considered to be a significant variance or indication of worsening financial control. A contribution was made from the General Fund working balance to cover the variance. • Savings of £500k have been built in to the 2015/16 budget with an additional revenue requirement of £130k. This will require continued tight financial controls to deliver. • The original approved capital programme for 2014/15 totalled £1,677k and was revised during the year to include slippage from 2013/14 and new schemes approved after the original budget was set to total £7,408k. The actual capital spend totalled £3,428k resulting in slippage of £3,980k which is roughly 50% of the revised budget. The Council should ensure that any new schemes approved for the financial year are deliverable in the agreed timeframe. • The Internal Audit and risk management arrangements are sound. 	Green
Prioritising resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has demonstrated a clear strategy and rationale for the use of its financial and other resources. The Council is starting to explore different ways of working to ensure stretched resources are prioritised in the right areas. 	Green
Improving efficiency & productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council understands its cost pressures and drivers, and has made use of bench-marking to support the development of the financial plan for 2014/15. The Council's Corporate Plan outlines the key priorities for service delivery and performance against the plans are monitored on a quarterly basis. • Key services are effective and the Council has not had to make any significant cuts to the frontline services in 2014/15. • The Council needs to strengthen its procurement arrangements following a 'red' rated report from Internal Audit during the year. 	Green

To support our VfM conclusion against the specified criteria we performed a risk assessment against VfM risk indicators specified by the Audit Commission, and additional indicators identified by ourselves. Following completion of our work we noted the following residual risks to our VfM conclusion:

Residual risk identified	Summary findings	RAG rating
Executive & Member Engagement (Financial Governance)	The Council should ensure that the Heads of Service have received full training and on-going support during the 2015/16 to ensure they fulfil the enhanced role in leading the Council as part of the newly formed management team. There needs to be a corporate focus by the Heads of Service from 2015/16 onwards to ensure the whole Council delivers the budget and savings identified.	Green
Budget setting & monitoring - revenue & capital (Financial Control)	The Council should ensure that amendments to the capital programme during the year are realistic and achievable by year end to avoid significant slippage in to the next financial year. In addition, the Council should ensure that when capital programme budgets are approved they are realistic to ensure that the final project costs are not overspent.	Amber
Effectiveness of key services (Improving efficiency & productivity)	The Council received a red rated report from Internal Audit during the year for the procurement arrangements. Improvements need to be made in the service and the Internal Audit recommendations and the findings from the recent external health check should be implemented to ensure value for money is achieved in contract procurement.	Red

Section 4: Fees, non-audit services and independence

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Fees, non-audit services and independence

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and confirm there were no fees for the provision of non audit services.

Fees

	Per Audit plan £	Actual fees £
Council audit	59,610	59,610
Grant certification on behalf of Audit Commission	13,030	13,030
Total audit fees	72,640	72,640

Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standards and therefore we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards.

Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
Audit related services	Nil
Non audit related services	Nil

Section 5: Communication of audit matters

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Communication of audit matters to those charged with governance

International Standard on Auditing ISA (UK&) 260, as well as other (UK&I) ISAs, prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table opposite.

The Audit Plan outlined our audit strategy and plan to deliver the audit, while this Audit Findings report presents the key issues and other matters arising from the audit, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

Respective responsibilities

The Audit Findings Report has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission (www.audit-commission.gov.uk).

We have been appointed as the Council's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing external auditors to local public bodies in England. As external auditors, we have a broad remit covering finance and governance matters.

Our annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice (the Code) issued by the Audit Commission and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work. Our work considers the Council's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Council is fulfilling these responsibilities.

	Audit Plan	Audit Findings
Our communication plan		
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	✓	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit. Form, timing and expected general content of communications	✓	
Views about the qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting and financial reporting practices, significant matters and issues arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		✓
Confirmation of independence and objectivity	✓	✓
A statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, relationships and other matters which might be thought to bear on independence. Details of non-audit work performed by Grant Thornton UK LLP and network firms, together with fees charged Details of safeguards applied to threats to independence	✓	✓
Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit		✓
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or others which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		✓
Compliance with laws and regulations		✓
Expected auditor's report		✓
Uncorrected misstatements		✓
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		✓
Significant matters in relation to going concern		✓

Appendices

Appendix A: Audit opinion

We anticipate we will provide the Council with an unmodified audit report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

We have audited the financial statements of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2015 under the Audit Commission Act 1998. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Collection Fund and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2014/15.

This report is made solely to the members of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, as a body, in accordance with Part II of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and as set out in paragraph 48 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by the Audit Commission in March 2010. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Resources and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Director of Finance and Resource's Responsibilities, the Director of Finance and Resource is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2014/15, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards also require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Authority's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Director of Finance and Resource; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial

information in the explanatory foreword to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements: give a true and fair view of the financial position of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council as at 31 March 2015 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2014/15 and applicable law.

Opinion on other matters

In our opinion, the information given in the explanatory foreword for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we report by exception

We are required to report to you if: in our opinion the annual governance statement does not reflect compliance with 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: a Framework' published by CIPFA/SOLACE in June 2007; or we issue a report in the public interest under section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998; or we designate under section 11 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 a recommendation as one that requires the Authority to consider it at a public meeting and to decide what action to take in response; or we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Conclusion on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Respective responsibilities of the Authority and the auditor

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly

the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

We are required under Section 5 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements, having regard to relevant criteria specified by the Audit Commission in October 2014.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention which prevent us from concluding that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria, published by the Audit Commission in October 2014, as to whether the Authority has proper arrangements for: securing financial resilience; and challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Audit Commission has determined these two criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether the Authority put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2015.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, the Authority had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Conclusion

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Audit Commission in October 2014, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the financial statements of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Commission.

Christian Heeger
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Appointed Auditor

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30 September 2015



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