



Accountants &
business advisers

Epping Forest District Council

Grant Claim Certification for the year ended 31 March 2008

May 2009

Executive Summary

Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Summary of certification	3
3	Conclusions.....	4

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the main issues arising from the certification of grant claims for the financial year ending 31 March 2008. We undertake grant claim certification as an agent of the Audit Commission, in accordance with the Certification Instructions issued by them after consultation with the relevant grant paying body.
- 1.2 After completion of the tests contained within the Certification Instruction the grant claim can be certified with or without amendment or, where the correct figure cannot be determined, may be qualified as a result of the testing completed.

2 Summary of certification

- 2.1 The table below identifies the certification status of the grant claims audited for the year ending 31 March 2008.

Claim	Qualified	Unqualified	Number of amendments	Value of amendments £
Pooling of housing capital receipts		✓	11	4,143
Housing and council tax benefit subsidy	✓			
Disabled facilities grant		✓	2	193,960
National non domestic rates return		✓	18	83,963
HRA subsidy (2007/08)		✓	6	74,577
HRA subsidy base data return (2009/10)	✓		9	Not applicable*

* This claim certifies property numbers upon which subsidy for future years is calculated and no associated monetary value is recorded in the claim

- 2.2 Although four of the six claims audited were unqualified, none of these were certified without amendment and, in a number of cases, additional testing had to be undertaken and additional enquiries made in order to resolve issues identified and make appropriate corrections to claim. A number of amendments were necessary because the draft claims provided did not agree to the supporting systems or ledger.
- 2.3 Two of the six claims audited were qualified due to issues relating to non compliance with the Certification Instruction and, therefore, the requirements of the grant paying body.
- 2.4 The primary reason for qualification of the housing and council tax benefit subsidy claim was inaccurate classification of overpaid benefit between the designated categories, each of which attracts a differing rate of subsidy. In accordance with the directions of Certification Instruction BEN01, the technical detail of the reasons for qualification were set out in a qualification letter to the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 2.5 The primary reason for qualification of the HRA subsidy base data return (2009/10) was due to the absence of detailed survey records in respect of the Council's housing stock. The records held by the Council do not contain sufficient detail to evidence that properties are classified in accordance with the requirements of Certification Instruction HOU02. We understand that this claim has historically been qualified for similar reasons by previous auditors.

3 Conclusions

- 3.1 There is scope for the Council to considerably improve its arrangements for the preparation of grant claims and supporting working papers for audit. All of the six draft claims prepared for the year ended 31 March 2008 were either qualified or amended (some substantially) as a result of audit.
- 3.2 To secure improvement to arrangements in future years recommendations have been made in a detailed Action Plan which has been agreed with officers.