

**Report to the Audit and Governance
Committee**



**Report Reference: AGC-009-2009/10.
Date of Meeting: 24 September 2009**

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development.

Subject: Audit Commission National Local Government Studies.

Responsible Officer: Steve Tautz (01992 564180).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee note the recent publication by the Audit Commission of national reports relevant to the Council's areas of service provision, and arrangements for the reporting of future national local government studies issued by the Commission.

Executive Summary:

This report provides details of national local government studies published by the Audit Commission, together with summaries of those reports issued during 2009 that are relevant to the Council's areas of service provision, and proposes arrangements for the reporting of future local government studies issued by the Commission.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

At the meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2009, members requested that details of all Audit Commission national reports and publications received by the Council be reported to the Committee for information.

Other Options for Action:

None. This report is presented at the request of the Audit and Governance Committee

Report:

1. The Audit Commission's national studies programme aims to improve local public services through an independent authoritative analysis of national evidence and local practice. The Commission has a duty to undertake studies designed to make recommendations for improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of certain bodies, and to improve the financial and other management of local public bodies. The Commission's national reports address strategic issues affecting specific sectors as well as the public sector as a whole, identifying practice that works, highlighting emerging findings and examining national trends to influence local practice and national policy.

2. The national local government studies published by the Audit Commission since 2000 are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report for the information of the Committee. Each of these reports can be downloaded directly from the Commission's website at:

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/pages/list.aspx?ctype=ACNationalStudy

3. To meet the request of members, it is intended that the publication of future national local government studies by the Audit Commission that relate to the Council's areas of service provision, be reported to the Committee on an ongoing basis. The Commission's Executive Summary (where produced) of each study will be provided to members for information, together with a weblink for the download of the full document.

4. The following national local government studies relating directly to the Council's areas of service provision, have so far been published by the Audit Commission during 2009. The Commission's reports in relation to other areas of local government service provision can be downloaded from its website:

(a) *'Tired Of Hanging Around: Using Sport and Leisure Activities to Prevent Anti-Social Behaviour by Young People'* (January 2009) - A summary of this report has been published by the Audit Commission and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Commission's website using the weblink above.

(b) *'Risk And Return: English Local Authorities and the Icelandic Banks'* (March 2009) - A summary of this report is attached as Appendix 3 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Audit Commission's website using the weblink above.

(c) *'Working Better Together: Managing Local Strategic Partnerships'* (April 2009) - A summary of this report has been published by the Audit Commission and is attached as Appendix 4 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Commission's website using the weblink above.

(d) *'Summing Up: A Review of Financial Management in Local Government 2005 – 2008'* (April 2009) - A summary of this report is attached as Appendix 5 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Audit Commission's website using the weblink above.

(e) *'Room For Improvement: Strategic Asset Management in Local Government'* (June 2009) - A summary of this report is attached as Appendix 6 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Audit Commission's website using the weblink above.

(f) *'Is There Something I Should Know: Making the Most of Information to Improve Services'* (July 2009) - A summary of this report has been published by the Audit Commission and is attached as Appendix 7 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Commission's website using the weblink above.

(g) *'When it Comes to the Crunch: How Councils are Responding to the Recession'* (August 2009) - A summary of this report is attached as Appendix 8 to this report. A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the Audit Commission's website using the weblink above.

5. The Committee is requested to note the recent publication by the Audit Commission of national reports relevant to the Council's areas of service provision, proposed arrangements for the reporting of future national local government studies issued by the Commission.

Resource Implications:

None.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal implications or Human Rights Act issues arising from the recommendations in this report.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations in this report for the Council's commitment to the Nottingham Declaration for climate change, the corporate Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, or any Crime and Disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

This report has been agreed by the Corporate Governance Group. Relevant reports of the Audit Commission are considered by the Corporate Executive Forum and Management Board as necessary.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

There are no risk management or equality implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.