

**Report to the Audit and Governance  
Committee**



**Report Reference: AGC-001-2010/11.  
Date of Meeting: 21 June 2010.**

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development.**

**Subject: Audit Commission National Local Government Studies**

**Responsible Officer: Steve Tautz (01992 564180).**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).**

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**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 any actions or implications for the Council arising from the reports.**

**Executive Summary:**

This report provides details of national local government studies recently published by the Audit Commission that are relevant to the Council's areas of service provision. Arrangements for the reporting of local government studies issued by the Commission were agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 24 September 2009.

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

**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. Each of national local government studies published by the Audit Commission since 2000 can be downloaded directly from the Commission's website at:

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

2. The following national local government study relating directly to the Council's areas of service provision, has been published by the Audit Commission since the last meeting of the Committee:

(a) 'Surviving The Crunch: Local Finances in the Recession and Beyond' (March 2010)

3. A summary of this discussion paper has not been published by the Audit Commission. A copy of the full report is therefore attached at Appendix 1 to this report, and can also be downloaded from the Commission's website using the weblink above.

4. The national local government studies published by the Audit Commission since the last meeting have been considered by the Corporate Governance Group (CGG). The CGG has suggested that some of the issues raised in the 'Surviving The Crunch' discussion paper should feature in forthcoming financial issues papers prepared for the Council, and this and any other possible actions or implications for the Council arising from the report, will be taken forward by the Director of Finance and ICT as part of the budget setting process for 2011/12 and future years.

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.

**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, and any possible actions or implications arising from the Audit Commission's national reports will be reported to the Committee. Relevant reports of the Audit Commission are also considered by the Corporate Executive Forum and Management Board as necessary.

**Background Papers:**

Audit Commission report - 'Surviving The Crunch: Local Finances in the Recession and Beyond' (March 2010)

## **Impact Assessments:**

### Risk Management

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

### Equality and Diversity:

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?*

No. The content of this report has no specific equality implications. However, the equality implications arising from any proposals for action in respect of areas for local authority improvement recommended by the Audit Commission would need to be considered if these were to be pursued by the Council.

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?*

N/A.

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*

N/A.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*

N/A.