

Annual Audit Letter

Nottingham City Council

Audit 2008/09

November 2009



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Status of our reports

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors/ members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director/member or officer in their individual capacity; or
 - any third party.
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Key messages

This report summarises the findings from our 2008/09 audit. It includes messages arising from the audit of your financial statements and the results of the work I have undertaken to assess your arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources.

Audit opinion and financial statements

- 1 You can take assurance from the fact that I have been able to give an unqualified opinion on the financial statements. I found that there were some errors in the ones that you gave me to audit, but I have agreed the changes that you made.
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Value for money

- 2 I have also given an unqualified value for money conclusion, as you have adequate processes in place to manage and use your resources to deliver value for money. The next step is for you to prove that these processes are actually helping you deliver priority services to the community.
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Financial position

- 3 You have had to make difficult decisions about your budget for 2009/10, including losing over 450 posts, and also reducing spending in some service areas. If no action is taken, then based on the position in November you would end up overspent by over £4m at the end of March. You are taking steps to try and break-even by then but this will be difficult. As will be setting a balanced budget for 2010/11 and beyond when your services will be in greater demand and your income uncertain because of the economic conditions.
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Organisational assessment

- 4 Overall you perform well. You are improving your planning, leadership and capacity. You have put in place a number of significant new plans over the last year, and ambitions for the city are now clear. You work in an increasingly effective way with partners such as health services and the Police, and you are more outward facing. Major investment programmes to transform neighbourhoods and improve transport, schools, housing and local facilities are making progress and resulting in improvements that people notice.

Report in the Public Interest

- 5 In January 2009, we issued a public report on your housing services from 2003 to 2005. We explained our concerns over the way you allocated some of your houses, along with a number of other issues. You accepted our report at the February meeting of the full Council. I will check on the progress that you are making to deal with the recommendations we made in the report.
- 6 We have already reported in January 2009 on the positive changes you have made to the way you run housing services. Following these changes significant government funding has been made available to you to help you improve the quality of your houses.

Actions

- 7 We have made recommendations within the body of this report and have agreed them with officers.

Financial statements and annual governance statement

The Council's financial statements and annual governance statement are an important means by which the Council accounts for its stewardship of public funds.

Significant issues arising from the audit

- 8 I gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements on 30 September 2009. I found that financial statements presented to me for audit contained one material and several non-material misstatements which you corrected. There was one non-material misstatement which you decided not to amend, and this did not affect my opinion.
 - 9 We had not issued the certificate of audit closure for 2005/06, 2006/07 or 2007/08 because of our investigations into housing matters. Following the issue of our public interest report in January 2009, we were able to issue the certificates for those three years on 30 September 2009, along with the certificate for 2008/09.
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Material weaknesses in internal control

- 10 I did not identify any significant weaknesses in your internal control arrangements.
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Accounting Practice and financial reporting

- 11 My audit considered the qualitative aspects of your accounting practices and financial reporting, and some issues arose.
- 12 I needed to do more work on your IT security framework than I had planned, following your identification of issues and commissioning of an external review that highlighted significant risks. You reported the issue promptly to the Audit Committee, and later reported on progress to address the risks, together with assurances that the risks had not materialised into actual problems. I was able to use of the measures you took to get the assurances I needed for my opinion on the financial statements and my value for money conclusion, which limited the additional work I needed to carry out.
- 13 You have acknowledged and committed to review the following.
 - The lack of a definitive list of approved posts (an establishment) that can be linked to employees across the whole Council.
 - The accounting and administration arrangements for the group accounts within your financial statements.

- 14 I know that you are currently planning for the mandatory introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) to local government. This is likely to involve a significant amount of analysis of financial and operational data, and it is vital for success that the project is owned by all departments and not seen as a finance responsibility. This will not be easy given the changes that you are going through.

Financial position

- 15 You overspent your budget for 2008/09 by £3.35m, and used reserves to make up the shortfall. You are facing a further financial challenge for 2009/10, and you reported to your November Executive Board a projected year-end overspend of £4.4m. You are working to address this and have a financial change programme underway that aims to deliver lasting efficiencies.
- 16 Last year we raised the fact that you had £41.6m invested in Icelandic Banks. You have since received around £2m and it looks like you will get most of it back - the latest estimate is that you will recover a total of £36m. Like all organisations you are also getting smaller returns than previously on your other investments because of lower interest rates, and you are also being very careful about whom you invest with because of the uncertain economic conditions. These changes have been reflected in your revised framework which documents your lower risk approach. We will review your framework again when you decide to change it.
- 17 The economic recession results in an increasing demand for public services and the likelihood of reduced levels of central government funding. Together, it is a significant challenge for councils as they seek to continue to provide services to local residents, whilst maintaining a sound financial position.
- 18 You took early action to help local people to cope with the recession, and are continuing to work with your partners in taking a range of actions that built on existing initiatives, aimed at both the short and medium/long term.
- 19 Delivering improved services in the current economic circumstances puts increased emphasis on the quality of the data that you base your decisions on. Your current review of capital planning is a key development, as you need to take into account the impact of the recession on your projections (such as reduced proceeds from sales). It will be vital to ensure that all of your financial and operational plans are updated for any changes to enable them to be compatible and viable.
- 20 The work you are doing to strengthen your budgeting (for example by bringing the process forward) and your medium term financial planning (including the consideration of different scenarios and the action that would need to be taken to deal with each) should provide better information for decision-making. However, it is likely that you will be required to make tough decisions on allocating resources for the foreseeable future because of the economic conditions. I will need to monitor your response and actions in this key area.

Public interest report

- 21** Last year's annual audit and inspection letter made brief reference to this report which set out the findings in relation to our investigation of the allegations and information received. The report examined two areas:
- the way in which properties were allocated to tenants; and
 - the use of a council in-house employment agency, First Call, to recruit staff into the Housing Department.
- 22** Whilst the matters reported upon were serious, they did not imply that all aspects of the Housing Service were deficient. However, between 2003 and 2005, the Housing Service in Nottingham was not consistently operating according to its own rules or in the best interests of the public. Some officers did not always allocate housing in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures. As a result council houses were not always allocated to those most in need.
- 23** We concluded that the failings in the Housing Service revealed in our investigation were a reflection of failings in the culture, systems and management of the Service. This was an organisation where policies and procedures were not consistently applied and where staff felt unable to question instructions and challenge things that appeared to them to be wrong.
- 24** This report was presented to full Council in February 2009 and the recommendations contained within it were adopted. I will be checking on the progress that you are making to deal with the recommendations we made in the report during 2009/10.
- 25** However, the re-inspection of Nottingham City Homes in January 2009 is a good indicator of positive change within housing. As we noted in last year's annual audit and inspection letter, this concluded that Nottingham City Homes (NCH) is providing a good, two-star service which has excellent prospects for improvement. The inspection found that staff and board members have worked effectively with their customers to improve existing services and to develop new ones. It also found that staff are committed to helping customers, with services being shaped and influenced by tenants and leaseholders. NCH has successfully addressed weaknesses identified in the last inspection and also strengthened its governance, structure and successfully changed the culture of the organisation. The two star rating has resulted in the release of significant Government funding to be used to ensure that council properties achieve the Decent Homes Standard.

Recommendations

- R1** Ensure that IFRS is delivered effectively - this will involve a commitment across all departments to provide all the operational and financial data needed.
- R2** Monitor the financial position and ensure that financial and operational plans are co-ordinated and regularly refreshed to reflect the changing economic conditions. This should also include planning on how to address medium as well as short term pressures.

Value for money and use of resources

I considered how well the Council is managing and using its resources to deliver value for money and better and sustainable outcomes for local people, and gave a scored use of resources judgement.

I also assessed whether the Council put in place adequate corporate arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the value for money (VFM) conclusion.

Use of resources judgements

- 26 In forming my scored use of resources judgements, I have used the methodology set out in the [use of resources framework](#). Judgements have been made for each key line of enquiry (KLOE) using the Audit Commission's current four point scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest.
- 27 I have also taken into account, where appropriate, findings from previous use of resources assessments (updating these for any changes or improvements) and any other relevant audit work.
- 28 The Council's use of resources theme scores are shown in Table 1 below. The key findings and conclusions for the three themes, and the underlying KLOE, are summarised in Appendix 1.

Table 1 Use of resources theme scores

Use of resources theme	Scored judgement
Managing finances	2
Governing the business	2
Managing resources	2

- 29 Your overall score was 2, the same as last year. However, this year's assessment is more challenging, with a greater focus on outcomes. We concluded that you manage most aspects of your everyday business adequately and sometimes well. You are getting better at making improvements in the way that you work. Plans increasingly lead to actions and achievements.

Value for money and use of resources

- 30 Delivery of your organisational change programme is part way through. You have successfully introduced significant new plans and policies. You have strengthened political and managerial leadership. Support services such as IT, people and financial management, and managing your property portfolio are making improvements. Work on improving value for money and on making services more customer friendly is at an early stage.
- 31 In common with many local government bodies, if your scores are to increase you need to demonstrate better how your arrangements result in improved outcomes in delivering your aims, including those relating to partnerships.

Recommendation

R3 Demonstrate how arrangements result in improved outcomes consistent with the Council's aims and those of its key partners.

VFM conclusion

- 32 I assessed your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources against criteria specified by the Audit Commission. From 2008/09, the Audit Commission will specify each year which of the use of resources KLOE are the relevant criteria for the VFM conclusion at each type of audited body. My conclusions on each of the areas that I assessed are set out in Appendix 1.
- 33 I issued an unqualified conclusion stating that you had adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 34 I also reported my review of your people management arrangements to the Audit Committee. I concluded that you have made good progress in relation to people management, but still have areas for improvement to address, such as leadership on people issues and staff engagement. I found that you are aware of these key issues and are taking steps or have plans to address them.

Managing performance and organisational assessment

The Comprehensive Area Assessment Lead has used my use of resources assessment along with an assessment of how well the Council manages its performance to come to an overall assessment for the Council. This is known as the organisational assessment.

Managing performance

- 35 The Audit Commission assesses how well you manage and improve your services and contribute to wider community outcomes. The assessment considers how successful you are in delivering your corporate priorities. The priorities have been drawn from what matters most to local people.
- 36 You score 3 out of 4 for managing performance. You have had a successful year in helping make Nottingham an even better place to travel around, and to visit and enjoy. Your work with the Police continues to result in big falls in overall crime as well as lower levels of public concern about antisocial behaviour although crime levels are still high compared to other similar areas.
- 37 Investment in housing, schools, parks and leisure centres is making steady improvements to people's quality of life in Nottingham's neighbourhoods. This is reflected in improving satisfaction levels with the area and with some services.
- 38 Ofsted has rated your children's services as performing well. The overall effectiveness of all inspected services, settings and institutions is good, and there is a clear and sustained trend in improvement in the proportion of young people achieving the higher grades at GCSE at age 16. However attainment at some levels is still lower than national and similar areas. A high and increasing number of young people stay in education, training or employment when they leave school.
- 39 The Care Quality Commission has rated your adult social care services as performing well. Leadership is good meaning ambitions are clear, commitment is strong to transforming these services and improvement is taking place. This is leading to more people living independently, people having more choice and a greater say, for example in care plans. Significant improvements have been made to arrangements to ensure adults are safeguarded.
- 40 In the face of difficult conditions and increasing demand for some services you have worked well to adjust your short-term plans yet keep moving with some of your longer term plans, such as regenerating the most needy neighbourhoods. You have established a comprehensive range of actions to help the city through the economic downturn and into recovery. The recession has affected the progress of some plans such as city centre retail development, and improving employment rates.

Managing performance and organisational assessment

- 41 Your aspirations for making the city clean and green have not made as much progress as planned in the past year. Street cleaning standards slipped temporarily although public satisfaction is generally good. Public satisfaction with refuse and recycling is not showing significant improvement. You now recognise that your ambitions and plans need revisiting, and this has begun.

Overall Organisational Assessment

- 42 The Use of Resources and Managing Performance assessments are combined to give an overall organisational assessment judgement for you. The Audit Commission has determined that the organisational assessment judgement for you is that you perform well.
- 43 There is a difference in the two scores for managing performance and use of resources. We have decided that the overall score should be that you perform well (table 2). This is because services are delivering improvements in important areas, plans, leadership and capacity are good and you are developing a track record of delivery against its plans.

Table 2 **Organisational assessment**

Managing performance	3 out of 4
Use of resources	2 out of 4
Organisational assessment	3 out of 4

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- 44 Your Managing Performance and Organisational Assessment are being reported separately by the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Area Assessment Lead for Nottingham, Stephen Barnett.

Closing remarks

- 45 I have discussed and agreed this letter with the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources. I will present this letter at the Audit Committee on 18 December 2009 and will provide copies to all Council members.
- 46 Further detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations arising from our audit work are included in the reports issued during the year.

Table 3

Report	Date issued
Audit plan	April 2008
Public interest report	January 2009
People management	July 2009
Annual Governance Report	September 2009
Opinion and certificate	September 2009
Organisational Assessment	December 2009

- 47 I was able to deliver most of the audit within the fee agreed at the start of the year. I needed to carry out additional work on IT security arrangements in order to get the assurance I needed for my opinion.

Table 4 Audit fees

	Actual (£'000)	Proposed (£'000)	Variance (£'000)
Financial statements and annual governance statement	239	231	8
Value for money	143	143	nil
Total audit fees	382	374	8

- 48 I am able to provide non-audit work under the Audit Commission's Advice and Assistance powers. I did not carry out any such work in 2008/09.

Closing remarks

Independence

- 49 I can confirm that the audit has been carried out in accordance with the Audit Commission's policies on integrity, objectivity and independence.
- 50 You have taken a positive and constructive approach to our audit. I wish to thank staff for their support and co-operation during the audit.

Sue Sunderland
District Auditor

December 2009

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

The following tables summarise the key findings and conclusions for each of the three use of resources themes.

Managing finances

Theme score – 2
Key findings and conclusions
The Council is taking steps to address its financial challenges which led to the 2008/09 budget deficit. There is clear Member and key officer leadership of the challenging 2009/10 budget, and a drive to strengthen ownership of accountability for delivering it. Performance and financial monitoring is becoming more interwoven. The Council is intending to review its Treasury Management policy (which is currently risk adverse) in 2009/10. Understanding of costs is not consistent across the Council as yet. Cost data are used effectively in option appraisals, but there is limited use of scenarios and comparatives beyond key decisions. Financial reporting is basically sound, but there are errors in the 2008/09 accounts adopted in June.

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

<p>KLOE 1.1 (financial planning)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>There is a deficit position for 2008/09 of £3.354m, reduced from an £8m projected overspend. The 2009/10 budget is challenging, including service cuts, losing a significant number of posts and also service developments. Delivering the savings programme will be vital to achieving it. The Council has involved a range of stakeholders in financial and service planning processes. Treasury management policy has been revised to be risk adverse to reflect market conditions and the risk appetite within the Council.</p>	
<p>KLOE 1.2 (understanding costs and achieving efficiencies)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>Understanding of costs and VFM is not consistent across the Council, but is being tested through the service plan process. There is limited investment analysis on a whole life basis regarding consideration of social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. The Council analyses and presents a good level of costing information in its key decision making, but options and scenarios are not routinely presented other than for key decisions.</p> <p>The Council has a good track record in making Gershon savings. Progress was better towards the 2008/09 cashable savings target but fell short of MTFP goals. There has been steady progress in looking at new ways of delivery. VFM overall is adequate but not yet good. In its key capital spending decisions, the Council is increasingly delivering what it plans although with slippage and overruns.</p>	

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

<p>KLOE 1.3 (financial reporting)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>Budget monitoring information is reliable, relevant and understandable, produced on a regular and timely basis, and prompt action is taken to address variances. Performance information is considered alongside financial information, and also linked to strategic objectives. Reports contain sufficient information to support the decisions users will make. The 2008/09 annual accounts were earlier. However, there were material and non-trivial errors in the accounts approved in June 2009, although these had no overall effect on the bottom line. The Arrow provides information in a format that is easy to understand and accessible.</p>	

Governing the business

<p>Theme score – 2</p>	
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>Plans are in place to ensure good practice commissioning but are not yet demonstrating outcomes across all areas, as key strategies are recent. The Council is increasing its emphasis on local suppliers to build partnerships and to support the economy, though some gaps remain. Evaluating procurement options is good for major schemes, but not routine. There are good arrangements for generating relevant & reliable data internally, but partnership data management is not as well developed. Monitoring performance against priorities is improving well, although some actions are not yet routine. The Council has a strong vision for good governance, but outcomes are not yet evident for key areas. Member/officer relations have improved. Ethical governance is not actively promoted, with low key monitoring of Codes of conduct. Risk management in relation to partnerships needs to be developed. There is an anti-fraud strategy, and publicity given to fraud prosecutions. The Audit Committee is developing its monitoring of internal control.</p>	

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

<p>KLOE 2.1 (commissioning and procurement)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>A Council-wide commissioning framework is being developed reflecting the city's sustainable community strategy. While plans are becoming clearer, such as a stronger focus on strengthening the local supplier base, there are few outcomes to date and management arrangements need developing. Stakeholder involvement in commissioning is strong in places. The Council's management of improvement through service redesign is having mixed success. Competitive review of in-house service provision has been limited. The Council is making procurement steadily more efficient, but challenges remain to developing sustainable suppliers for example in domiciliary care and children's placements. The Council responded quickly to the economic downturn in developing a resilience strategy that takes account of suppliers' needs. A good range of policies and procedures guide the evaluation of options, and compliance is strengthening, but option appraisal is not routine beyond major projects and major expenditure.</p>	
<p>KLOE 2.2 (data quality and use of information)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>The Council's arrangements to ensure data is relevant and reliable are generally good. There are significant challenges, for example; in developing sound PIs to underpin the Local Area Agreement's performance management framework, harmonising information systems within the Council to improve neighbourhood working, and embedding the council-wide environmental management system. Formalised data sharing arrangements are less well developed than informal intelligence sharing which is very good in places. The Council understands the needs of its key decision makers, and provides information effectively to them. This is an improved area. A 2008 baseline assessment identified significant weaknesses relating to IT governance and controls. Plans are progressing steadily to address the issues raised. Monitoring performance against priorities has developed recently, and departmental performance focus is strengthening.</p>	

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

<p>KLOE 2.3 (good governance)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>Governance of key partnerships is reviewed and strengthened effectively, including working with the third sector. Ethical governance could be promoted more. Appropriate codes of conduct are in place but compliance monitoring has a low profile. The Standards Committee performs a narrow range of functions, and has a limited focus. The Council clearly sets out its principles of good governance and in promoting a strong vision and purpose, but cannot yet demonstrate impact. Individual development plans for members are recent. Management development is an acknowledged area for development. Member/officer relations have improved with working arrangements becoming more productive, although it is too early to say that this is delivering the scale and pace of change anticipated by the Council's vision. Much effort has been put into developing an outward facing culture, but this remains work in progress.</p>	
<p>KLOE 2.4 (risk management and internal control)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Key findings and conclusions</p>	
<p>The Council's risk register now links better to strategic objectives, and is being developed further. Risk management in relation to partnerships needs improvement. The Council has an Anti Fraud Strategy. The Strategic Partnership Governance Framework is being developed which should cover counter fraud arrangements. The Council publicises cases of fraud, and carries out fraud preventive work. The Audit Committee monitors progress against actions to address significant internal control concerns. Its intended annual report process should increase its consideration of internal control in overall terms.</p>	

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

Managing resources

Theme score 2	
Key findings and conclusions	
<p>The Council has led nationally on promoting the Nottingham Declaration, promotes carbon reduction targets with key partners, and is seeking a workplace parking levy to encourage use of public transport. The Council has a good understanding of its natural resources usage, has set targets relating to carbon and energy reduction and has identified how it will achieve them. There is clear corporate commitment to key projects that will help deliver aims. Measures on climate change adaptation are less clear. Managing performance to reduce use of natural resources is not as well developed. The Council has an Asset Management Plan which links to Corporate Plan priorities. It recognises that it needs to improve asset data. It uses benchmarking where possible, and has used assets for the benefit of the community. The developing Strategic Regeneration Frameworks should help to improve funding and communication.</p>	
KLOE 3.1 (use of natural resources)	
Score	2
VFM criterion met	Yes
Key findings and conclusions	
<p>The Council is performing well in some key areas, but needs to follow up its strong intent by implementing its plans. The corporate environmental management system will play a key role in this but is not yet embedded. The Council led nationally in promoting the Nottingham declaration, and LSP partners support the principle of harmonised carbon reduction goals. The Council has developed a carbon management plan with the Carbon Trust, and has a good understanding of its use of natural resources. Areas of priority activity relating to carbon and energy reduction are also key corporate projects eg the PFI street lighting scheme aims to contribute a 30 per cent energy saving. A high level environmental policy sets out wider aspirations relating to climate change and reducing the Council’s natural resource ‘footprint’. But it is not clear what the Council’s strategy is for delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, and biodiversity has a low profile generally. The Council’s focus is stronger on carbon and energy reduction than on how it will minimise its use of other natural resources.</p>	

Appendix 1 – Use of resources key findings and conclusions

Key findings and conclusions	
<p>In terms of achievements to date, corporate arrangements are developing in order to coordinate the large number of environmental actions to improve their impact and visibility. Some initiatives are already well established and have a high profile, but there is no track record in measurable achievements in carbon reduction, and the Council does not promote its own environmental stewardship achievements in a coherent way. The Council has increased emphasis on working with local suppliers recently. Sustainable construction and procurement policies are influencing contracts and tenders.</p>	
<p>KLOE 3.2 (strategic asset management)</p> <p>Score</p> <p>VFM criterion met</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Yes</p>
Key findings and conclusions	
<p>The Council has an Asset Management Plan, including a process of rationalisation of Council owned properties, which supports the Council's strategic plan. The Council carries out benchmarking on asset management. Maintenance requirements are being addressed through a three year programme based on a rolling programme of condition surveys, and the Workplace Strategy should significantly reduce the maintenance requirement over the next five years. The Council has demonstrated partnership working by sharing assets and providing land to schemes which will benefit the wider community. The introduction of Strategic Regeneration Frameworks should enable external funding for future community benefit.</p>	

Appendix 2 – Action plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
Annual Audit Letter 2008/09 Recommendations						
7	R1 Ensure that IFRS is delivered effectively - this will involve a commitment across all departments to provide all the operational and financial data needed.	3	Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources	Yes	Preparation for IFRS is incorporated into the Financial Change programme. This includes engaging with all departments.	To meet IFRS adoption for 2010/11
7	R2 Monitor the financial position and ensure that financial and operational plans are co-ordinated and regularly refreshed to reflect the changing economic conditions. This should also include planning on how to address medium as well as short term pressures.	3	Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources	Yes		Ongoing
9	R3 Demonstrate how arrangements result in improved outcomes consistent with the Council's aims and those of its key partners.	3	Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources	Yes		Ongoing

The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Our work across local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services means that we have a unique perspective. We promote value for money for taxpayers, auditing the £200 billion spent by 11,000 local public bodies.

As a force for improvement, we work in partnership to assess local public services and make practical recommendations for promoting a better quality of life for local people.

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