

### South Hams District Council

#### Reports issued by the Audit Commission since last meeting

- Unqualified opinion on the 2010/11 accounts and unqualified VFM conclusion issued 29/9/11
- Unqualified Whole of Government Accounts return certified 30/9/11
- Annual audit letter 2010/11 (attached)
- Audit of systems controls and financial statements 2010/11 (attached)

#### Work in progress

- Grant claims audit – Completion of benefits claim audit work
- Detailed planning and initial work for 2011/12 audit.

#### Audit Commission events and national reports

- October 2011 – The AC has invited tenders from 13 potential bidders to carry out the outsourced audit of local government (including South Hams District Council) in 10 lots for a period of 3 or 5 years from 2012/13. The AC's Chief Executive wrote to audited bodies on 10<sup>th</sup> November, updating them on procurement progress.
- October 2011 – The AC confirmed that it intends to deliver final accounts workshops for clients early in 2012. The workshops will be run on a similar basis to previous years and will run from mid-January to the end of February. Invitations will be sent in due course.
- November 2011 – The AC published *Protecting the Public Purse 2011 – Fighting Fraud against Local Government*. This is a summary of what has happened in the field of fraud detection and prevention since 2010, including the findings from our latest fraud survey. The report concludes that:
  - housing tenancy fraud could cost the public purse £900 million each year;
  - councils detected more than £22 million of false claims for student and single person council tax discounts;
  - housing and council tax benefits fraud losses accounted for more than half of the total fraud losses detected by councils;
  - counter-fraud professionals increasingly recognise abuse of personal budgets in adult social care as a fraud risk for councils; and
  - councils detected 145 cases of procurement fraud amounting to £14.6 million.

The report contains a checklist for audit committees and the AC has also provided a comparator tool for single person discount (SPD) that allows local authorities to compare their levels of SPD with predicted levels, based on a national average. Two other briefing documents are available for councillors in parish & town councils and for governors in schools.

Documents relating to the above are available from the Audit Commission website.

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[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)