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The Members
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23 October 2013

Dear Members,

Annual Audit Letter

The purpose of this Annual Audit Letter is to communicate to the Members of Bracknell Forest Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work, which we consider should be brought to their attention.

We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work to the Governance and Audit Committee in the 2012/13 audit results report issued on 30 September 2013.

The matters reported here are the most significant for the Authority.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of Bracknell Forest Council for their assistance during the course of our work.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Thompson

For and behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
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In March 2010 the Audit Commission issued a revised version of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' (Statement of responsibilities). It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the **Audit Commission's website**.

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the Audit Commission's appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The Standing Guidance serves as our terms of appointment as auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. The Standing Guidance sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2010 (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

1. Executive summary

Our 2012/13 audit work has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan we issued on 27 March 2013 and is conducted in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

The Authority is responsible for preparing and publishing its Statement of Accounts, accompanied by the Annual Governance Statement. In the Annual Governance Statement, the Authority reports publicly on an annual basis on the extent to which it complies with its own code of governance, including how it has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. The Authority is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

As auditors we are responsible for:

- ▶ Forming an opinion on the financial statements;
- ▶ Reviewing the Annual Governance Statement;
- ▶ Forming a conclusion on the arrangements that the Authority has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- ▶ Undertaking any other work specified by the Audit Commission.

Summarised below are the conclusions from all elements of our work:

Audit the financial statements of Bracknell Forest Council for the financial year ended 31 March 2013 in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland)	On 30 September 2013 we issued an unqualified audit opinion for the Authority.
Form a conclusion on the arrangements the Authority has made for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.	On 30 September 2013 we issued an unqualified value for money conclusion.
Issue a report to those charged with governance of the Authority (the Governance and Audit Committee) communicating significant findings resulting from our audit.	On 30 September 2013 we issued our report for the Authority.
Report to the National Audit Office on the accuracy of the consolidation pack the Authority is required to prepare for the Whole of Government Accounts.	We reported our findings to the National Audit Office on 30 September 2013.
Consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work and consider whether it complies with CIPFA/SOLACE guidance.	No issues to report.
Consider whether, in the public interest, we should make a report on any matter coming to our notice in the course of the audit.	No issues to report.
Determine whether any other action should be taken in relation to our responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act.	No issues to report.
Issue a certificate that we have completed the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Code of Practice issued by the Audit Commission.	On 30 September 2013 we issued our audit completion certificate.
Issue a report to those charged with governance of the Authority summarising the certification (of grant claims and returns) work that we have undertaken.	We will issue our annual certification report to those charged with governance with respect to the 2012/13 financial year on 28 January 2014.

2. Key findings

2.1 Financial statement audit

We audited the Authority's Statement of Accounts in line with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) and other guidance issued by the Audit Commission. We issued an unqualified audit report on 30 September 2013.

In our view, the quality of the process for producing the accounts, including the supporting working papers, was good, and there very few issues arising from our audit.

The significant risk identified as part of our audit is set out below:

Significant risk: Valuation of Other Land and Buildings and investment properties

In previous audits the valuation of other land and buildings and investment properties was classified as a significant risk. The Council improved its arrangements in 2011/12 and was planning further development for 2012/13. In addition to revaluing properties on the Council's cyclical programme for valuation, a desk top review of remaining properties was planned. We have assessed whether these improvements have addressed the risk identified.

Our approach focussed on:

- ▶ Assessing the controls management has in place and the outcome of planned improvements.
- ▶ Testing the controls in place during the year.
- ▶ Substantively testing the valuations of other land buildings and investment properties.

Our work concluded that:

- ▶ Control design is adequate
 - ▶ Controls tested are working as designed.
 - ▶ Our work on substantive testing of valuations identified no issues.
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2.2 Value for money conclusion

We are required to carry out sufficient work to conclude on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

In accordance with guidance issued by the Audit Commission, in 2012/13 our conclusion was based on two criteria:

- ▶ The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience; and
- ▶ The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 30 September 2013. Our audit did not identify any significant matters. The Authority continues to manage its financial position well and look for ways to improve efficiency. Given the scale of medium term financial challenges the Authority faces, it needs to continue to look to the longer term. This has been supported by the LGA peer review carried out during the year at the invitation of the Council.

2.3 Objections received

We did not receive any objections to the 2012/13 accounts from members of the public.

2.4 Whole of government accounts

We reported to the National Audit office, on 30 September 2013, the results of our work performed in relation the accuracy of the consolidation pack the Authority is required to prepare for the whole of government accounts. We did not identify any major areas of concern but reported one inconsistency on the disclosure of pensions.

2.5 Annual governance statement

We are required to consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's Annual Governance Statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work, and consider whether it complies with CIPFA/SOLACE guidance. We completed this work and did not identify any areas of concern.

2.6 Certification of grants claims and returns

We will issue the Annual Certification Report for 2012/13 on 28 January 2014.

3. Control themes and observations

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we communicate to those charged with governance at the Authority, as required, significant deficiencies in internal control.

We did not identify any significant deficiencies in internal control.

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