

## Accounts Commission Reports

### Report by John Blair, Director, Corporate Resources

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report advises the Council's Audit Committee of national reports which have recently been published by Audit Scotland and which relate to Local Government. This first report covers the period from 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013.

#### 2 Recent Reports

During 2013 the following national reports were published:-

| Date            | Report   | Destination                           |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 31 January 2013 | Protecting customers   | Accounts Commission                   |
| 14 March 2013   | Major capital investments in councils  | Accounts Commission                   |
| 20 March 2013   | Improving community planning in Scotland   | Auditor General / Accounts Commission |
| 28 March 2013   | Responding to challenges and change – An overview of local government in Scotland 2013 | Accounts Commission                   |

Full copies of these reports are available in the Member's Library or via Audit Scotland's website at [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk). In view of the significance of the overview of Local government in Scotland report 2013 this is also appended.

#### 3 Background

##### 3.1 Protecting Consumers

This report details the role and future of Trading Standards Services within Councils noting the increased use of a risk based approach to inspections.

**Contact:**

Stephen Thomson, Principal Trading Standards & Laboratory Manager

Phone: 0131 271 3553

Email: [stephen.thomson@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.thomson@midlothian.gov.uk)

## **Major Capital Investments in Councils**

This report provides the first comprehensive review of major capital investment in Councils.

The report outlines good practice guide and contains a number of recommendations for Councils and questions for Elected Members aimed at reinforcing and promoting effective scrutiny and challenge of major capital projects and programmes.

### **Contact:**

Gary Fairley, Head of Finance and Human Resources

Phone: 0131 271 3110

Email: gary.fairley@midlothian.gov.uk

## **Improving Community Planning in Scotland**

This report was produced jointly by the Accounts Commission and Auditor General for Scotland. The aim of the report is to contribute to the debate about how community planning in Scotland can be improved to meet the significantly raised expectations as set out in the Scottish Government COSLA Statement of Ambition.

The report contains a number of recommendations on how councils need to improve performance.

### **Contact:**

Alasdair Mathers, Regeneration & Social Policy Manager

Phone: 0131 271 3438

Email: Alasdair.mathers@midlothian.gov.uk

## **Responding to Challenges and Change**

This report focuses on how councils are responding to the pressures facing local government and makes recommendations on what more needs to be done.

A number of challenges are identified in the report including financial pressures, dealing with welfare reform and continuing to provide Best Value. There is also a section on the changes that impact on Councils in terms of people and finances.

The report also contains action points for Councillors on leadership and governance, working in partnership and service changes.

### **Contact:**

Nancy Brown, Transformation Programme Manager

Phone: 0131 271 3702

Email: nancy.brown@midlothian.gov.uk

## Summary

All Commission reports have been referred to the appropriate Council services via lead officers to review the level of compliance as set out in the report's recommendation section within the report.

### 4 Report Implications

#### 4.1 Resource

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

#### 4.2 Risk

Risks facing the Council may be reduced following review and implementation of any relevant recommendations following each review as set out in the reports.

#### 4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

#### 4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

None

#### 4.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

This report addresses the need for the Council to formally review the Accounts Commission reports with the aim of improving performance and Best Value.

#### 4.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report has not involved direct consultation with stakeholders.

#### 4.7 Ensuring Equalities

There are no equalities in relation to this report.

#### 4.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

No sustainability issues were identified from this report.

#### **4.9 IT Issues**

None

#### **5 Recommendations**

The Audit Committee are invited to:-

- (1) Note the Accounts Commission Reports for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013;
- (2) Note the actions that will be taken in respect of each of the reviews ensuring that key issues are linked to the relevant Council strategies and the Community Planning Partnership; and
- (3) Receive details of National Reports on a quarterly basis in future.

**11 June 2013**

**Report Contact:**

John Blair, Director, Corporate Resources  
[john.blair@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:john.blair@midlothian.gov.uk)

Tel No: 0131 271 3102

**Background Papers:**

**Declaration Box**

*Instructions: This box must be completed by the author of the report. The box will be copied and saved by the Council Secretariat who will delete it from the report prior to photocopying the agenda.*

*Title of Report: Accounts Commission Reports*

*Meeting Presented to: Audit Committee*

*Author of Report: John Blair, Director, Corporate Resources*

***I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-***

- All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.***
- All risk implications have been addressed.***
- All other report implications have been addressed.***
- My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.***

***For Cabinet reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.***

***Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for Midlothian Council has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.***