

Auditor's statutory report on the Best Value Performance Plan

Auditor's Report to Shildon Town Council on its Best Value Performance Plan for 2003/2004

Certificate

I certify that I have audited Shildon Town Council's Best Value Performance Plan in accordance with section 7 of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act) and the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice. I also had regard to supplementary guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

Respective responsibilities of the Council and the auditor

Under the Act the Council is required to prepare and publish a Best Value Performance Plan summarising the Council's assessments of its performance and position in relation to its statutory duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement to the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the plan and for the information and assessments set out within it. The Council is also responsible for establishing appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments in its plan are derived. The form and content of the Best Value Performance Plan are prescribed in section 6 of the Act and statutory guidance issued by the Government.

As the Council's auditor, I am required under section 7 of the Act to carry out an audit of the Best Value Performance Plan, to certify that I have done so, and:

- to report whether I believe that the plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 6 of the Act and statutory guidance and, where appropriate, recommending how the plan should be amended so as to accord with statutory requirements
- to recommend:
 - where appropriate, procedures to be followed in relation to the plan
 - whether the Audit Commission should carry out a Best Value inspection of the Council under section 10 of the Act
 - whether the Secretary of State should give a direction under section 15 of the Act.

Opinion

Basis of this opinion

For the purpose of forming my opinion whether the plan was prepared and published in accordance with the legislation and with regard to statutory guidance, I conducted my audit in accordance with the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice. In carrying out my audit work, I also had regard to supplementary guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

I planned and performed my work so as to obtain all the information and explanations, which I considered necessary in order to provide an opinion on whether the plan has been prepared and published in accordance with statutory requirements.

In giving my opinion I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of the information or the realism and achievability of the assessments published by the Council. My work therefore comprised a review and assessment of the plan and, where appropriate, examination on a test basis of relevant evidence, sufficient to satisfy me that the plan includes those matters prescribed in legislation and statutory guidance and that the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation and statutory guidance.

Where I have qualified my audit opinion on the plan I am required to recommend how the plan should be amended so as to comply in all significant respects with the legislation and statutory guidance.

Unqualified opinion

In my opinion, Shildon Town Council has prepared and published its Best Value Performance Plan in all significant respects in accordance with section 6 of the Act and statutory guidance issued by the Government.

Recommendations on referral to the Audit Commission/Secretary of State

I am required each year to recommend whether, on the basis of my audit work, the Audit Commission should carry out a Best Value inspection of the Council or whether the Secretary of State should give a direction.

On the basis of my work:

- I do not recommend that the Audit Commission should carry out a Best Value inspection of Shildon Town Council under section 10 of the Act
- I do not recommend that the Secretary of State should give a direction under section 15 of the Act.



David Parkin, District Auditor

31 December 2003