

Audit Committee – 27th January 2011

5. Certification of Claims and Returns: Annual Report

Strategic Director: Mark Williams, Chief Executive
Assistant Director: Donna Parham (Finance and Corporate Services)
Lead Officer: Donna Parham
Contact Details: donna.parham@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462225

Purpose of the Report

This report introduces the annual report from the Audit Commission on their findings from signing off of claims and returns for 2009/10.

Recommendation

The Audit Committee is asked to note the contents of the Certification of Claims and Returns: Annual Report 2009/10.

Introduction

The Certification of Claims and Returns: Annual Report is included within the remit of the Audit Committee under its terms of reference as follows:

“To consider the effectiveness of SSDC’s risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and corruption arrangements and seek assurance from management that action has been taken”

“To consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies and seek assurance from management that action has been taken”

Grant Claims

The Audit Commission reviews three key claims/ returns for SSDC. These are:

- Housing and Council Tax Benefit Scheme;
- Disabled Facilities grants;
- National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Return.

The report from the Audit Commission is attached at pages 3-15. As was the case in the previous year the Housing and Council Tax Benefit scheme was given a qualified opinion. This was because of errors found in claims once tested, although as members can see from page 8 the values of the errors were relatively low.

An action plan has been agreed to improve this position in future years and the plan is outlined on page 10 of the Audit Commission’s report. No errors were found within the Disabled Facilities Claim. A small error was found of £277 within the NNDR claim and an amendment made.

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Financial Implications

None as a consequence of this report but £15,894 will need to be repaid to the Department of Works and Pensions and £277 repaid in terms of NNDR.

A further fee of £1,760 has been estimated for further work to be carried out on the 2008/09 housing benefit and council tax benefit subsidy claim. The further testing has been at South Somerset's request and benefit.

Background Papers: *Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim*
Disabled Facilities Grants Claim
National Non-Domestic Rates Return