

### **Report for Resolution**

**Report To:**           **Audit Committee – 11 March 2010**

**Subject:**           **Audit Commission National Studies**

**Report of:**       **Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit**

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#### **Summary**

This report sets out details of a recent Audit Commission study that relates to local government.

#### **Recommendations**

To note the report

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#### **Wards Affected:**

None

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#### **Contact Officers:**

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#### **Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

None

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the most recent Audit Commission studies affecting local government issued since the last report to the Committee in December 2009.

## **2.0 Recently Published Studies**

- 2.1 The following study has been published by the Audit Commission since the last report to Committee in December 2009.

### **Under pressure : Tackling the financial challenge for councils of an ageing population**

The report says that councils and their partners face the challenge of an ageing population as public spending reduces. But many councils don't know enough about the costs of their ageing population or the savings possible from preventive and collaborative action.

It urges organisations to work together to provide preventive and early intervention schemes, which enhance older people's independence and quality of life and may provide better value for money than money spent on residential care. The report includes examples of such schemes.

***Under Pressure*** underlines how important it is for councils to understand the nature and needs of their ageing population. It stresses the need for all services to take account of this population and for medium term financial plans to consider this group. It highlights the need to consult and involve older people to guide services and service development.

Councils face the challenge of an ageing population as public spending reduces –

- The ageing population will affect all councils not just those with social care responsibilities. It will also affect partners in health, policing and housing.
- Public spending will reduce over the next few years and councils and their partners will be expected to find billions in savings.
- An ageing population has a range of impacts. If care service costs simply increase with the population they could nearly double by 2026.
- Older people are more likely to volunteer to support local communities. Carers over 60 provide care worth twice public spending on care services for older people

## **3.0 Future planned study reports and anticipated date for publication -**

- 3.1 **Older teenagers not in education, employment or training**  
(Publication date: Summer 2010)

This study will consider what resources are available to support the NEET agenda, how efficiently they are being used and ways areas could do more to maximise the resources they have. Read further information about the NEET study.

### 3.2 **Strategic financial management**

(Publication date: Summer 2010 and subsequent support tools in Summer 2010)

This national study builds on the work done for the World Class Financial Management, especially financial governance and leadership; financial planning and finance for decision making.

The study will review how councils develop and use strategic financial planning tools and will help them to improve strategic financial management and links to the planning of services and other interventions. It will examine the costs and benefits of strategic financial planning, determine which approaches, if any, offer most benefits and identify the key principles of effective strategic financial and risk management.