

Cuts to the quangos can benefit the community

Among the cuts announced by the Government recently was the decision to axe the Audit Commission.

Now that may not mean much to local taxpayers but it has a very real significance to local authorities.

The role of the commission was to assess services the council delivered. The problem was it didn't matter whether you were Stafford, Southampton, or Sunderland. Their inspection was a 'one size fits all' and it appeared ticking boxes was more important to them than understanding the needs of our community.

And I said as much in a local newspaper article as long ago as July last year!

At a recent conference I took the chief executive of the Audit Commission to task because I felt they provided poor value for their money.

In a nutshell we had to pay the commission £160,000 a year to carry out their work and then had to wait nearly nine months for a report which - as mentioned previously - was not always relevant to Stafford Borough.

What we want to provide is services that meet and support the needs of our community – not carry out box ticking exercises.

That is why I am not disappointed the Audit Commission is to go.

It means despite the financial difficulties we face in the months and years to come we can at least concentrate on delivering for our community – and save local taxpayers' money.

Mike Heenan
Leader of the Council

September 2010