

### Launch of Audit Service Web Site

The Saint Helena Audit Service web site, [www.audit.gov.sh](http://www.audit.gov.sh), was officially launched today.

Offering something for everyone, the site includes a wealth of information including coverage of why the Audit Service exists, all the latest audit news and publications, and details on career opportunities.

For the first time ever, Value For Money audit reports are being made available to the general public through this medium – and visitors can contact the Audit Service using an on-line form – which includes the opportunity for them to help shape audit work plans and pass on, in confidence, any concerns they may have over how public money is being used.

A free news alert service allows people to join a mailing list and be notified when new press releases and publications are issued – and an on-line facility, “AuditNet”, will be developed to give audit clients secure on-line access to information reserved exclusively for them.

Chief Auditor, Andy Bonner, comments

*“I am delighted we now have our very own web site. It forms a crucial part of our communication plans and allows us to share information and reach out to the public, our clients and others in ways not previously possible. Other than the staff time involved, all this has been achieved without expense and ongoing web hosting services have been secured at zero cost making this a real success story for us.”*

Behind the site is an Audit team with a strong commitment to ensure that it is well maintained into the future. Auditor, Helena Bennett will take responsibility for the ongoing upkeep and technical management of the site – and editorial oversight will come from the Audit Management Team.

Great care has been taken with regard technical design. All pages are coded to the XHTML 1.0 specification and meet all the requirements set by the World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Accessibility Initiative. This ensures compliance with UK Disability Discrimination Act principles covering public service web sites and, it is estimated, places the site within the top 1% of web sites worldwide in terms of meeting best practice design standards.

Acknowledging that not everyone has access to the Internet, the Audit Service is offering a free facility to ensure that visitors to their offices in Garden Hall, Castle Gardens, can view the site at leisure and need not miss out on what it has to offer. To take advantage of this facility, the public are asked to make an appointment with the Audit Service in advance.

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#### Background information for editors:

1) Prior to [www.audit.gov.sh](http://www.audit.gov.sh), the Audit Service had a small token presence on the Saint Helena Government web site.

2) Internationally agreed Web Accessibility Standards are set by the World Wide Web Consortium - w3c.org. Pages can be rated ‘0’, ‘A’, ‘AA’, or ‘AAA’ compliant. The [www.audit.gov.sh](http://www.audit.gov.sh) pages meet the ‘AAA’ standard.

3) Under the UK Disability Discrimination Act (1995), anyone providing a public service must ensure they do not discriminate against a disabled person by providing an un-accessible web site. A disabled person can make a claim for compensation and enforcement of improvements to the website if access to information is impossible or unreasonably difficult. A useful reference - <http://www.tomw.net.au/2001/bat2001.html#maquire> - is the case brought against the Sydney Olympics Committee in Australia in 2000 by a blind man who successfully sued the organizing committee of the Sydney Olympics for their failure to make their website accessible.

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