

Summary

The Audit Committee is tasked with assessing whether the operational and financial objectives and targets set by the City Council have been achieved in the municipality and local authority corporation and whether the operations have been organised in an effective and appropriate manner. Here are some highlights from the results of the assessments concerning 2019.



There are challenges related to the City's management system.

The Audit Committee assessed the direction provided by the City Executive Office, mayor and deputy mayors to the City divisions as well as the roles of different actors in the new management system. It has become easier for the City Executive Office and mayor to direct the City organisation formed by the City divisions. However, the City's management system has become fragmented as a result of the new mayor model: there is unclarity within the City divisions about who directs what. The deputy mayors do not have the authority to direct the City divisions, but there are still expectations regarding their authority. The division of labour between the deputy mayors and the executive directors of the City divisions is clear to neither the media, the municipality's residents nor the staff. The mayor's strong role in the new management system has raised concerns about the concentration of power. The role of the city manager has not become a counterforce to the mayor.

According to the City divisions, the City Executive Office operates like a silo within the boundaries of its divisions, which leads to contradictory direction. The City divisions also wish that the City Executive Office would understand their everyday work better and involve them in the preparation of the City's common policies at a sufficiently early phase.



There is a significant shortage of staff in early childhood education and care.

Several objectives were set for early childhood education and care (ECEC) in the City Strategy, such as increasing the degree of participation. These objectives were achieved for the most part, but the staff shortage may undermine the achievement of the objectives in the future. It is important to ensure that Swedish-language ECEC is realised in the children's first language according to the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care.



The quality control of the 24-hour care of the elderly is functional.

The quality control of the 24-hour care provided by the City for the elderly is sufficient in purchased services and satisfactory in the City's own service provision. In the future, more resources must be reserved for supporting, monitoring and developing the in-house control of the City's operational units. Together with the Council of the Elderly, the Social Services and Health Care Division must conduct annual assessments of the sufficiency and quality of social services for the elderly to support the City's decision-making, financial planning and reporting on well-being.



Contacting oral health care services is difficult.

Patients should be able to contact oral health care services without delay during office hours on weekdays. However, the phone line for non-urgent appointments was closed on several days in 2019, and the problems continued at the beginning of 2020. The oral health care services must continue looking into the problems in contacting non-urgent appointment booking and the availability of appointments and, based on this investigation, take the necessary measures to resolve the problems.



The electronic health care services are high quality. Nevertheless, traditional service channels are needed.

The Social Services and Health Care Division must safeguard the equal accessibility of electronic services in Finnish, Swedish and English and seek to provide services in plain language. The different disabilities and limitations of the users must be taken into account better in the electronic services.



The cost estimate for Jokeri Light Rail increased by 40 per cent; the budget for the Crown Bridges is uncertain.

The cost estimate for Jokeri Light Rail increased by 40 per cent in three years. By investing in planning in the initial phase, the cost estimate could have been made more accurate from the start. The project plan for the Crown Bridges is from 2016, and it is probable that the cost estimate will be exceeded, considering the exceptional nature of the project and the long planning and implementation periods. The Urban Environment Division and Helsinki City Transport (HKL) must improve the planning process in the initial phase and invest sufficient funds in projects in the planning phase.



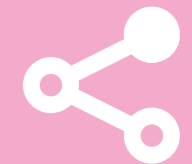
Comprehensive schools have enough computers, but teachers lack digital training.

Digital environments, systems and equipment have been introduced at comprehensive schools in accordance with the digitalisation programme, but the teachers' skills have not developed as planned. There is a lack of sufficient monitoring data on the development of the pupils' skills.



In its present condition, the City is not sufficiently equipped to manage disturbances caused by street construction sites.

The City is unable to monitor the great number of worksites to a sufficient degree or intervene in operations efficiently enough in the event of issues.



The functionality of Helsinki's digital services could be developed.

The quality of the City of Helsinki's digital services is good, for the most part. However, there is room for development in the functionality of the services in regards to customers being able to get all the services they need through the same service channel and not needing to enter their personal information again into different services, for example.