

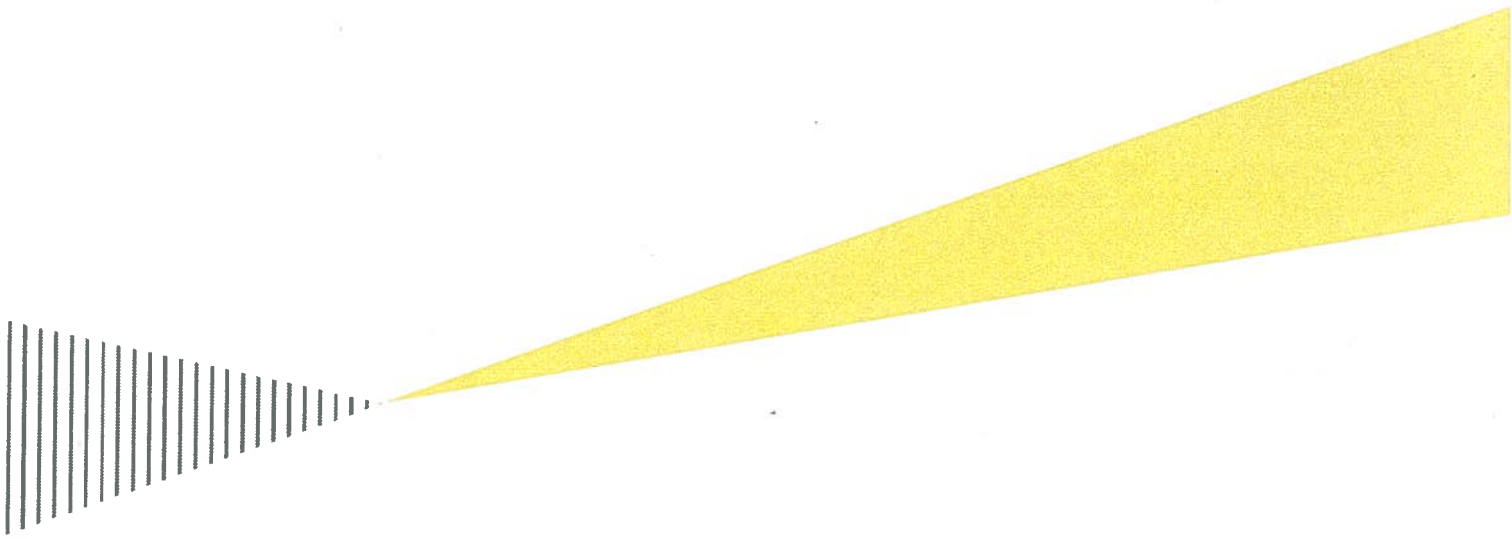
Oxfordshire County Council

Year ending 31 March 2015

Audit Plan

22 April 2015

Ernst & Young LLP



EY

Building a better
working world



Ernst & Young LLP
Apex Plaza
Forbury Road
Reading
RG1 1YE

Tel: + 44 118 928 1599
Fax: + 44 118 928 1101
ey.com

Audit and Governance Committee
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

9 April 2015

Dear Committee Members

Audit Plan

We are pleased to attach our Audit Plan which sets out how we intend to carry out our responsibilities as your auditor. Its purpose is to provide the Audit and Governance Committee with a basis to review our proposed audit approach and scope for the 2014/15 audit in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Code of Audit Practice, Standing Guidance, auditing standards and other professional requirements. It is also to ensure that our audit is aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

This plan summarises our initial assessment of the key risks driving the development of an effective audit for the Council, and outlines our planned audit strategy in response to those risks.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this plan with you on 22 April 2015 and to understand whether there are other matters which you consider may influence our audit.

Yours faithfully

Maria Grindley
Director
For and behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
United Kingdom

Enc

Contents

1. Overview	1
2. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014	3
3. Financial statement risks	4
4. Economy, efficiency and effectiveness	6
5. Our audit process and strategy.....	9
6. Independence.....	13
Appendix A Fees.....	16
Appendix B UK required communications with those charged with governance	17

In March 2010 the Audit Commission issued a revised version of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' (Statement of responsibilities). It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the [Audit Commission's website](#).

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the Audit Commission's appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The Standing Guidance serves as our terms of appointment as auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. The Standing Guidance sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2010 (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Plan is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Audit and Governance Committee, and is prepared for the sole use of the audited body. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

1. Overview

Context for the audit

This Audit Plan covers the work that we plan to perform to provide you with:

- ▶ Our audit opinion on whether the financial statements of Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2015 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- ▶ A statutory conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We will also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO), to the extent and in the form required by them, on the Council's Whole of Government Accounts return.

When planning the audit we take into account several key inputs:

- ▶ Strategic, operational and financial risks relevant to the financial statements;
- ▶ Developments in financial reporting and auditing standards;
- ▶ The quality of systems and processes;
- ▶ Changes in the business and regulatory environment; and
- ▶ Management's views on all of the above.

By considering these inputs, our audit is focused on the areas that matter and our feedback is more likely to be relevant to the Council. Our audit will also include the mandatory procedures that we are required to perform in accordance with applicable laws and auditing standards.

We have identified two significant risks to the opinion on the financial statements, which are the risk of management override and the risk of revenue and expenditure recognition and two other financial statement risks relating to the resources in finance and the approach to accounting for schools.

There are two significant risks to our value for money conclusion, overall delivery of financial resilience and the partnership agreement with Hampshire County Council around back office services. In addition to this we are considering two other areas in relation to the conclusion, the decision making around the chief executive role and the operation bullfinch serious case review. We must consider these because of the nature of local authority finances and ever-increasing pressures on management to achieve financial targets.

In parts three and four of this plan we provide more detail on the above areas and we outline our plans to address them. Our proposed audit process and strategy are summarised below and set out in more detail in section five.

We will provide an update to the Audit and Governance Committee on the results of our work in these areas in our report to those charged with governance scheduled for delivery in September 2015.

Our process and strategy

Financial statement audit

We consider materiality in terms of the possible impact of an error or omission on the financial statements and set an overall planning materiality level. We then set a tolerable error to reduce the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds planning materiality to an appropriately low level. We also assess each disclosure and consider qualitative issues affecting materiality as well as quantitative issues.

We assess the controls in operation in each process affecting the financial statements and consider whether we will rely on them. We currently do not expect to rely on controls over some of the Council's systems where it is more efficient to do so.

The Council has a good track record in producing financial statements with few or no adjusting errors. We expect this to continue and would ask that, given the financial and other pressures on the Council, any errors identified through the audit process are adjusted for.

To the fullest extent permissible by auditing standards, we will rely on the work of internal audit where appropriate. Internal audit maintain documentation of key processes, document and evaluate changes, and test management controls.

The key members of our audit team are Maria Grindley (Director), Alan Witty (Senior Manager) and Di Rice (Lead Executive)

There has been no change to the scope of our audit compared to previous audits.

Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Our approach to the value for money (VFM) conclusion for the Council for 2014/15 is based on criteria specified by the Audit Commission relating to whether there are proper arrangements in place within the Council for:

- ▶ Securing financial resilience; and
- ▶ Challenging how the Council secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We adopt an integrated audit approach, so our work on the financial statement audit feeds into our consideration of the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Further detail is included in section 4 of this Audit Plan.

Certification work

No grant claim work is planned or expected.

2. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) closes the Audit Commission and repeals the Audit Commission Act 1998.

The 2014 Act requires the Comptroller and Auditor General to prepare a Code of Audit Practice. This must be laid before Parliament and approved before 1 April 2015.

Although this new Code will apply from 1 April 2015, transitional provisions within the 2014 Act provide for the Audit Commission's 2010 Code to continue to apply to audit work in respect of the 2014/15 financial year. This plan is therefore prepared on the basis of the continued application of the 2010 Code of Audit Practice throughout the 2014/15 audit.

3. Financial statement risks

We outline below our assessment of the financial statement risks facing the Council, identified through our knowledge of the Council's operations and discussion with those charged with governance and officers. At our meeting, we will seek to validate these with you.

Significant risks (including fraud risks)	Our audit approach
Risk of management override	
<p>As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.</p>	<p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements; ▶ reviewing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias, and ▶ evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.
Revenue and expenditure recognition	
<p>ISA 240 requires auditors' consideration of the risks of material misstatement due to fraud to be based on a presumption that there are risks of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition. This is due to the potential pressures or incentives on management to commit fraudulent financial reporting to achieve an expected financial outcome through inappropriate revenue and expenditure recognition.</p> <p>Given the level and nature of revenue and expenditure; and the financial challenges facing the Council, we are unable to rebut this presumption of fraud and therefore assess this as a significant risk.</p>	<p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ evaluating the types of revenue and expenditure and the associated risks; ▶ evaluating the selection and application of relevant accounting policies by the Council; ▶ understanding the systems relevant controls; and ▶ performing audit procedures to obtain the necessary assurance.
Other financial statement risks	
Oxfordshire County Council resources	
<p>The Council is going into partnership to deliver a number of back office functions to a Hampshire Partnership known as the Integrated Business Centre (IBC) from 1 July 2015.</p> <p>A number of staff working in the finance function will be made redundant or transfer to Hampshire County Council on that date. Some staff may leave before then and staff are involved in preparing for the partnership arrangement. The Council are bringing in additional resources to provide cover for the year end close down and preparation of the final statements. There is a risk that sufficient and knowledgeable resources will not be available to complete the financial statements or respond to audit queries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We will liaise with the Finance Team at the Council and discuss accounting issue that arise during the close down process; ▶ We will monitor the timetable to deliver the financial statements to ensure that key milestones are achieved; and ▶ Review and monitor response times to audit queries to ensure that the audit remains on target to meet our reporting deadlines
Accounting for schools' non-current assets	
<p>The 2015 Accounting Code confirms that local authority maintained schools (community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation) should be treated as entities for financial reporting purposes in accordance with IFRS 10, and adapts the definition of single entity financial statements so that schools are consolidated into these statements.</p> <p>In December 2014, CIPFA/LASAAC issued LAAP Bulletin 101 Accounting for Non-Current Assets Used by Local Authority Maintained Schools providing guidance on the application of the Accounting Code to non-current assets, particularly in respect of Voluntary Aided (VA), Voluntary Controlled (VC), and some foundation schools where non-current assets are owned by a third party.</p> <p>Despite the changes to the Accounting Code and the additional guidance included in LAAP Bulletin 101, there remains the potential for different interpretations of how</p>	<p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ confirming that the Council have not applied a 'blanket' approach to recognition, but have considered the nature of the agreements in place locally when determining their accounting approach; ▶ ensuring that the Council have correctly applied the relevant accounting standards (IAS16) to the non-current assets for each category of schools; ▶ reviewing documentation and evidence that support the accounting treatment adopted; and ▶ ensuring appropriate disclosures of the judgments and accounting policies applied to schools' assets.

non-current school assets are accounted for in 2014/15.

Respective responsibilities in relation to fraud and error

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that management has the primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud. It is important that management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, has a culture of ethical behaviour and a strong control environment that both deters and prevents fraud.

Our responsibility is to plan and perform audits to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free of material misstatements whether caused by error or fraud. As auditors, we approach each engagement with a questioning mind that accepts the possibility that a material misstatement due to fraud could occur, and design the appropriate procedures to consider such risk.

Based on the requirements of auditing standards our approach will focus on:

- ▶ Identifying fraud risks during the planning stages;
- ▶ Enquiry of management about risks of fraud and the controls to address those risks;
- ▶ Understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud;
- ▶ Consideration of the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud;
- ▶ Determining an appropriate strategy to address any identified risks of fraud; and
- ▶ Performing mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks.

We will consider the results of the National Fraud Initiative and may refer to it in our reporting to you.

4. Economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Our approach to the value for money (VFM) conclusion for the Council for 2014/15 is based on criteria specified by the Audit Commission relating to whether there are proper arrangements in place at Council for securing:

- ▶ Financial resilience, and
- ▶ Economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The Audit Commission VFM guidance for 2014/15 requires that auditors consider and assess the significant risks of giving a wrong conclusion and carry out as much work as is appropriate to enable them to give a safe conclusion on arrangements to secure VFM. Our assessment of what is a significant risk is a matter of professional judgement, and is based on consideration of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the subject matter in question.

For those significant risks identified by our risk assessment that are relevant to our VFM conclusion, where these risks will not be addressed by our financial statements audit work or work undertaken by the Council, Audit Commission or other review agency, we consider the need to undertake local VFM work.

At this stage we have identified two significant risks, one relating to financial resilience and one relating to achievement of value for money in the use of resources. We acknowledge the Council operates in a context of increasing financial pressure and we will keep our risk assessment under review throughout our audit and communicate to the Audit and Governance Committee any additional local risk-based work we may need to undertake.

Significant risks	Impacts arrangements for securing	Our audit approach
Delivering financial resilience		
The Council is reporting an overspend in both Adult and Children's Social Care and is having to plan for significant cuts in spending in future years. In the Cabinet report of 24 February 2015 directorates are forecasting to overspend by £4.3m, This has reduced by £6m compared to the £10.3m forecast overspend reported to Cabinet in December. The forecast includes the release of £2.8m corporate contingency to Children's Social Care as agreed by Council on 4 November 2014. This is a changing position as the Council identifies savings and we understand that the next report to Cabinet on 21 April will set out a projected overspend in 2014/15 of £1.2m (having used £2.7m contingency). A balanced budget has been set for 2015-16 but this includes the used of reserves. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan dated April 2014 identifies savings of £64m and over the period of the Plan earmarked reserves will fall by £90m to £12.6m.	Financial resilience	Our approach will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Assessing the robustness of processes for identifying and implementing savings ▶ Review of the 2015-16 budget and Medium Term Financial Plans – 2014/15 -2017/18.
Partnership with Hampshire County Council		
To make cost savings the Council has decided to go into partnership for the delivery of its back office functions. The Council undertook a soft market testing and were contacted by Hampshire County Council who invited them to join a partnership with them, Hampshire Chief Constable and Hampshire Fire and Rescue known as the Integrated Business Centre (IBC). The Council accepted this offer and during the on-boarding process the scope of what will be included in the partnership has been reduced. This will have changed the costs and savings from those in the initial plan and the basis of pay-back calculation.	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources	Our approach will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ assessing the decision making process; ▶ reviewing the project planning and desired benefits; ▶ reviewing legal advice obtained; ▶ reviewing comparative financial information used in decision making including pay-back; and ▶ reviewing mechanisms to manage the implementation and subsequent running of the partnership.

Other value for money considerations	Impacts arrangements for securing	Our audit approach
Decision making around the Chief Executive role		
<p>At a meeting of the County Council on the 17 February 2015 it was decided that the Chief Executive would be made redundant and would not be replaced. The reason for this decision was to save costs and streamline the management structure of the Council. On the 26 February 2015 the Council announced that following questions from Members and legal advice the Council would review the current proposal. Report to County Council on 24 March 2015 recommended to rescind the decision to make the Chief Executive redundant and this was agreed.</p>	<p>Economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources</p>	<p>Our approach will focus on assessing the robustness of the process for decision making in relation to the Chief Executive position.</p>
Operation Bullfinch Serious Case Review		
<p>The serious case review was released in March 2015. Since operation Bullfinch the Council have taken extensive action in a number of areas. We need to consider whether there are any matters coming out of the review that impact on our audit.</p>	<p>Economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources</p>	<p>Our approach will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviewing the serious case review and the actions taken by the Council and whether there are any implications for our vfm conclusion.

5. Certification work

No certification is planned for 2014/15 under the contract let by the Audit Commission for Oxfordshire County Council.

6. Our audit process and strategy

6.1 Objective and scope of our audit

Under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice (the 'Code') our principal objectives are to review and report on, the Council's:

- ▶ Financial statements; and
- ▶ Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources to the extent required by the relevant legislation and the requirements of the Code.

We issue a two-part audit report covering both of these objectives.

i Financial statement audit

Our objective is to form an opinion on the financial statements under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We will also review and report to the NAO on the Whole of Government Accounts return to the extent and in the form they require.

ii Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness

The Code sets out our responsibility to satisfy ourselves that the Council has proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. In arriving at our conclusion, we will rely as far as possible on the reported results of the work of other statutory inspectorates on corporate or service performance.

In examining the Council's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements, we consider the following criteria and areas of focus specified by the Audit Commission:

- ▶ Arrangements for securing financial resilience – whether the Council has robust systems and processes to manage financial risks and opportunities effectively, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future; and
- ▶ Arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness – whether the Council is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.

6.2 Audit process overview

Our audit involves:

- ▶ assessing the key internal controls in place and undertaking walkthroughs to confirm our understanding of the processes;
- ▶ review and re-performance of the work of internal audit where we intend to rely on their work;
- ▶ reliance on the work of other auditors where appropriate;
- ▶ reliance on the work of experts in relation to areas such as pensions and valuations; and
- ▶ substantive tests of detail of transactions and amounts.

Processes

Our initial assessment of the key processes across the Council has not identified any key processes where we will seek to test key controls. We have concluded that a substantive approach will be a more efficient audit approach.

Analytics

We will use our computer-based analytics tools to enable us to capture whole populations of your financial data, in particular journal entries. These tools:

- ▶ Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be subject to more traditional substantive audit tests; and
- ▶ Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than random sampling techniques.

We will report the findings from our process and analytics work, including any significant weaknesses or inefficiencies identified and recommendations for improvement, to management and the Audit and Governance Committee.

Internal audit

As in prior years, we will review internal audit plans and the results of their work. We will reflect the findings from these reports, together with reports from any other work completed in the year, in our detailed audit plan, where we identify issues that could have an impact on the year-end financial statements.

Use of experts

We will use specialist EY resources as necessary to help us to form a view on judgments made in the financial statements. Our plan currently includes involving specialists in pensions and valuation.

Mandatory procedures required by auditing standards

As well as the financial statement risks outlined in section three, we must perform other procedures as required by auditing, ethical and independence standards, the Code and other regulations. We outline below the procedures we will undertake during the course of our audit.

Procedures required by standards

- ▶ Addressing the risk of fraud and error;
- ▶ Significant disclosures included in the financial statements;
- ▶ Entity-wide controls;
- ▶ Reading other information contained in the financial statements and reporting whether it is inconsistent with our understanding and the financial statements; and
- ▶ Auditor independence.

Procedures required by the Code

- ▶ Reviewing, and reporting on as appropriate, other information published with the financial statements, including the Governance Statement;
- ▶ Reviewing and reporting on the Whole of Government Accounts return, in line with the instructions issued by the NAO; and

- ▶ Reviewing and examining, where appropriate, evidence relevant to the Council's corporate performance management and financial management arrangements, and its reporting on these arrangements.

6.3 Materiality

For the purposes of determining whether the financial statements are free from material error, we define materiality as the magnitude of an omission or misstatement that, individually or in aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the users of the financial statements. Our evaluation requires professional judgement and so takes into account qualitative as well as quantitative considerations implied in the definition. We have determined that overall materiality for the financial statements of the Council is £10.184 million based on 1% of gross expenditure.

We will communicate uncorrected audit misstatements greater than £509,000 to you.

The amount we consider material at the end of the audit may differ from our initial determination. At this stage, however, it is not feasible to anticipate all the circumstances that might ultimately influence our judgement. At the end of the audit we will form our final opinion by reference to all matters that could be significant to users of the financial statements, including the total effect of any audit misstatements, and our evaluation of materiality at that date.

6.4 Fees

The Audit Commission has published a scale fee for all authorities. This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Audit Commission Act in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice 2010. The indicative fee scale for the audit of Council is £146,610. No grant claim work is planned or expected. Given the increased level of risks identified this year we envisage that we may need to undertake more work and this will result in an additional fee. This will be discussed with the S151 officer when it is clearer how much additional work is required.

6.5 Your audit team

The engagement team is led by Maria Grindley, who has significant experience on local authority audits. Maria is supported by Alan Witty who is responsible for the day-to-day direction of audit work and is the key point of contact for the Chief Finance Officer.

6.6 Timetable of communication, deliverables and insights

We have set out below a timetable showing the key stages of the audit, including the VFM work and the Whole of Government Accounts. The timetable includes the deliverables we have agreed to provide to the Council through the Audit and Governance Committee cycle in 2014/15. These dates are determined to ensure our alignment with the Audit Commission's rolling calendar of deadlines.

From time to time matters may arise that require immediate communication with the Audit and Governance Committee and we will discuss them with the Committee Chair as appropriate.

Following the conclusion of our audit we will prepare an Annual Audit Letter to communicate the key issues arising from our work to the Council and external stakeholders, including members of the public.

Our audit process and strategy

Audit phase	Timetable	Audit and Governance Committee timetable	Deliverables
High level planning	December 2014 and January 2015	25 February 2015	Progress Report
Risk assessment and setting of scopes	February 2015	22 April 2015	Audit Plan
Testing routine processes and controls	March & April 2015	1 July 2015	Progress Report
Year-end audit	July & August 2015		
Completion of audit	September 2015	16 September 2015	<p>Audit Results Report</p> <p>Auditor's report (including our opinion on the financial statements and overall value for money conclusion)</p> <p>Audit completion certificate</p> <p>Reporting to the NAO on the Whole of Government Accounts return.</p>
Conclusion of reporting	October 2015	18 November 2015	Annual Audit Letter

In addition to the above formal reporting and deliverables we will seek to provide practical business insights and updates on regulatory matters.

7. Independence

7.1 Introduction

The APB Ethical Standards and ISA (UK and Ireland) 260 'Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance', requires us to communicate with you on a timely basis on all significant facts and matters that bear on our independence and objectivity. The Ethical Standards, as revised in December 2010, require that we do this formally both at the planning stage and at the conclusion of the audit, as well as during the audit if appropriate. The aim of these communications is to ensure full and fair disclosure by us to those charged with your governance on matters in which you have an interest.

Required communications	
Planning stage	Final stage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The principal threats, if any, to objectivity and independence identified by EY including consideration of all relationships between you, your affiliates and directors and us; ▶ The safeguards adopted and the reasons why they are considered to be effective, including any Engagement Quality Review; ▶ The overall assessment of threats and safeguards; ▶ Information about the general policies and process within EY to maintain objectivity and independence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on our objectivity and independence, the threats to our independence that these create, any safeguards that we have put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable our objectivity and independence to be assessed; ▶ Details of non-audit services provided and the fees charged in relation thereto; ▶ Written confirmation that we are independent; ▶ Details of any inconsistencies between APB Ethical Standards, the Audit Commission's Standing Guidance and your policy for the supply of non-audit services by EY and any apparent breach of that policy; and ▶ An opportunity to discuss auditor independence issues.

During the course of the audit we must also communicate with you whenever any significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of our safeguards, for example when accepting an engagement to provide non-audit services.

We also provide information on any contingent fee arrangements, the amounts of any future contracted services, and details of any written proposal to provide non-audit services;

We ensure that the total amount of fees that EY and our network firms have charged to you and your affiliates for the provision of services during the reporting period are disclosed, analysed in appropriate categories.

7.2 Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

We highlight the following significant facts and matters that may be reasonably considered to bear upon our objectivity and independence, including any principal threats. However we have adopted the safeguards below to mitigate these threats along with the reasons why they are considered to be effective.

Self-interest threats

A self-interest threat arises when EY has financial or other interests in your entity. Examples include where we have an investment in your entity; where we receive significant fees in respect of non-audit services; where we need to recover long outstanding fees; or where we enter into a business relationship with the Council.

At the time of writing, there are no long outstanding fees.

We believe that it is appropriate for us to undertake permissible non-audit services, and we will comply with the policies that the Council has approved and that are in compliance with the Audit Commission's Standing Guidance.

The non-audit fees at the date of this report: are as follows:

Non audit work	£
Financial analysis for payment mechanism for Ardley E/W Facility	6,000
High level review of the potential for unitary status	33,000
Assurance report on Teachers Pension	10,000

We believe that this additional work does not pose a threat to either our financial statements opinion or value for money conclusion work because of its size compared to the audit fee and also as it does not impact on any areas that are subject to our Code audit work.

A self-interest threat may also arise if members of our audit engagement team have objectives or are rewarded in relation to sales of non-audit services to the Council. We confirm that no member of our audit engagement team, including those from other service lines, is in this position, in compliance with Ethical Standard 4.

There are no other self-interest threats at the date of this report.

Self-review threats

Self-review threats arise when the results of a non-audit service performed by EY or others within the EY network are reflected in the amounts included or disclosed in the financial statements.

There are no self-review threats as the non-audit work does not cover areas that we audit under the Code i.e. the opinion or value for money conclusion.

Management threats

Partners and employees of EY are prohibited from taking decisions on behalf of management of your entity. Management threats may also arise during the provision of a non-audit service where management is required to make judgements or decisions based on that work.

There are no management threats at the date of this report as none of the non-audit work involves us taking decisions on behalf of management.

Other threats

Other threats, such as advocacy, familiarity or intimidation, may arise. David Guest who has worked on the interim financial audit has known and plays football with a member of the finance team. This member of staff works on Treasury Management and David Guest is prohibited from working on aspects of the audit relating to Treasury Management.

There are no other threats at the date of this report.

Overall Assessment

Overall we consider that the adopted safeguards appropriately mitigate the principal threats identified, and we therefore confirm that EY is independent and the objectivity and independence of Maria Grindley, the audit engagement Director and the audit engagement team have not been compromised.

7.3 Other required communications

EY has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report, which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this report is for the year ended 27 June 2014 and can be found here:

<http://www.ey.com/UK/en/About-us/EY-UK-Transparency-Report-2014>

Appendix A Fees

A breakdown of our agreed fee is shown below.

	Planned Fee 2014/15 £	Out-turn 2013/14 £	Published fee 2013/14 £
Opinion Audit and VFM Conclusion	146,610	146,610	146,610
Total Audit Fee – Code work	146,610	146,610	146,610
Non audit work			
Financial analysis for payment mechanism for Ardley E/W Facility	6,000	6,000	
High level review of the potential for unitary status	33,000		
Assurance report on Teachers Pension	10,000		
Total Fee	195,610		
Certification of claims and returns	0*	4,541**	700

All fees exclude VAT.

**the Audit Commission sets the claim scale fee by formula, based on the audit two years previously (i.e. in 2012/13). At the moment there is no planned certification work.*

*** Local transport plan major projects*

The agreed fee presented above is based on the following assumptions:

- ▶ Officers meeting the agreed timetable of deliverables;
- ▶ We can rely on the work of internal audit as planned;
- ▶ The Audit Commission making no significant changes to the use of resources criteria on which our conclusion will be based;
- ▶ Our accounts opinion and use of resources conclusion being unqualified;
- ▶ Appropriate quality of documentation is provided by the Council; and
- ▶ The Council has an effective control environment.

If any of the above assumptions prove to be unfounded, we will seek a variation to the agreed fee.

Please note - given the increased level of risks identified this year we envisage that we may need to undertake more work and this will result in an additional fee. This will be discussed with the S151 officer when it is clearer how much additional work is required.

Fees for the auditor's consideration of correspondence from the public and formal objections will be charged in addition to the scale fee.

Appendix B UK required communications with those charged with governance

There are certain communications that we must provide to the Audit and Governance Committee. These are detailed here:

Required communication	Reference
<p>Planning and audit approach Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations.</p>	▶ Audit Plan
<p>Significant findings from the audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures ▶ Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit ▶ Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management ▶ Written representations that we are seeking ▶ Expected modifications to the audit report ▶ Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Misstatements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion ▶ The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods ▶ A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected ▶ In writing, corrected misstatements that are significant 	▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Fraud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiries of the Audit and Governance Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity ▶ Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist ▶ A discussion of any other matters related to fraud 	▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Related parties Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Non-disclosure by management ▶ Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions ▶ Disagreement over disclosures ▶ Non-compliance with laws and regulations ▶ Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity 	▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>External confirmations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Management's refusal for us to request confirmations ▶ Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures 	▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Consideration of laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off ▶ Enquiry of the Audit and Governance Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Audit and Governance Committee may be aware of 	▶ Report to those charged with governance

Required communication	Reference
<p>Independence Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's objectivity and independence Communication of key elements of the audit engagement director's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The principal threats ▶ Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness ▶ An overall assessment of threats and safeguards ▶ Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit Plan ▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Going concern Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty ▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements ▶ The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Report to those charged with governance
<p>Fee Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the agreement of the initial audit plan ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Audit Plan ▶ Report to those charged with governance ▶ Annual Audit Letter if considered necessary
<p>Certification work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Summary of certification work undertaken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Annual Report to those charged with governance summarising grant certification, if any grant claim completed.

EY | Assurance | Tax | Transactions | Advisory

Ernst & Young LLP

© Ernst & Young LLP. Published in the UK.
All Rights Reserved.

The UK firm Ernst & Young LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC300001 and is a member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited.

Ernst & Young LLP, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF.

ey.com
