External Audit Plan 2017/18

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

February 2018

Summary for Audit & Performance Review Panel

Financial statements

There are no significant changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting ("the Code") in 2017/18, which provides stability in terms of the accounting standards the Authority need to comply with. Despite this, the deadline for the production and signing of the financial statements has been significantly advanced in comparison to year ended 31 March 2017. Whilst the Authority chose to advance its own accounts production timetable last year, the Authority will be required to produce Group accounts for the first time and further advances will be required in order to ensure that deadlines are met. As a result we have recognised a significant risk in relation to this matter.

In order to meet the revised deadlines it will be essential that the draft financial statements and all prepared by client documentation is available in line with agreed timetables. Where this is not achieved there is a significant likelihood that the audit report will not be issued by 31 July 2018.

Materiality

Materiality for planning purposes has been set at **£4.6 million** for the Authority and **£25 million** for the Pension Fund.

We are obliged to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance and this has been set at **£0.23 million** for the Authority and **£1.25 million** for the Pension Fund.

Significant risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error have been identified as:

- **Valuation of land and buildings –** Whilst the Authority operates a cyclical revaluation approach, the Code requires that all land and buildings be held at fair value. We will consider the way in which the Authority ensures that assets not subject to in-year revaluation are not materially misstated, as well as reviewing the basis of valuation for those assets that have been revalued;
- **Pension Liabilities –** The valuation of the Authority's pension liability, as calculated by the Actuary, is dependent upon both the accuracy and completeness of the data provided and the assumptions adopted. We will review the processes in place to ensure accuracy of data provided to the Actuary and consider the assumptions used in determining the valuation; and
- **Group accounts and faster Close –** As set out above, the timetable for the production of the financial statements has been significantly advanced with draft accounts having to be prepared by 31 May (2017: 30 June) and the final accounts signed by 31 July (2017: 30 September). In addition, the Authority will be producing Group accounts for the first time, which will place an additional burden on the Finance team. We will work with the Authority in advance of our audit to understand the steps being taken to meet these deadlines and the impact on our work.

Summary for Audit & Performance Review Panel (cont.)

Financial Statements (cont.)	**Pension Fund risks** In relation to the Pension Fund audit, those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures have been identified as: – **Valuation of hard to price investments –** The Pension Fund invests in a range of assets and funds, some of which are inherently harder to value due to there being no publicly available quoted prices. We will verify a selection of investments to third party information and confirmations; and – **Valuation of the longevity hedge** – The Pension Fund has in place a longevity insurance policy with ReAssure Ltd to cover a closed group of pensioner members. The Pension Fund pays the policy an annual fixed premium where in return the insurer pays out benefits to the pensioners. The contract is recognised on the Pension Funds' Net Asset Statement and increases in value if the life expectancy of Fund members increases. Therefore, the contract must be kept under regular review to ensure its valuation and disclosure are in accordance with accounting standards. **See pages 5 t o10 for more details**
Value for Money Arrangements work	We have not yet completed our detailed risk assessment regarding your arrangements to secure value for money, however our initial VFM audit planning has identified the following significant VFM audit risks to date: – **Delivery of Budgets** – As a result of reductions in central government funding, and other pressures, the Authority is having to make additional savings beyond those from prior years. We will consider the way in which the Authority identifies, approves, and monitors savings and how budgets are monitored throughout the year; and – **Management of contracts** – As part of its Transformation Programme, the Authority has moved to a new operating model for some services and now delivers Children's Services and Adult Social Care through other vehicles such as Optalis and Achieving for Children. We will consider the arrangements in place for managing the contracts, including arrangements for monitoring the performance of the service and verifying the accuracy of costs and payments under the contract. **See pages 13 to 17 for more details**
Logistics	Our team is: – Darren Gilbert – Director – Duncan Laird – Senior Manager – Sonya Patel – In charge More details are in **Appendix 2**.

Summary for Audit & Performance Review Panel (cont.)

Logistics (cont.)	Our work will be completed in four phases from January to July and our key deliverables are this Audit Plan and a Report to Those Charged With Governance as outlined on **page 20**. Our fee for the 2017/18 audit is £81,803 (2016/17: £81,803) for the Authority and £24,831 (2016/17: £33,755) for the Pension Fund see **page 19**. These fees are in line with the scale fees published by PSAA, with additional fees in 2016/17 for work on behalf of other admitted body auditors and work on the revised longevity hedge model. Any changes are subject to approval by PSAA.
Acknowledgements	We would like to take this opportunity to thank officers and Members for their continuing help and co-operation throughout our audit work.

Introduction

Background and Statutory responsibilities

This document supplements our Audit Fee Letter 2017/18 presented to you in April 2017, which also sets out details of our appointment by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA).

Our statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice and the PSAA Statement of Responsibilities.

Our audit has two key objectives, requiring us to audit/review and report on your:

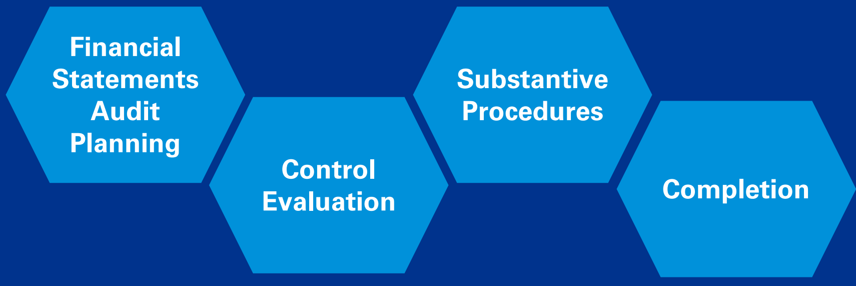
01 **Authority and Pension Fund Financial statements :**
Providing an opinion on your accounts. We also review the Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report and report by exception on these; and

02 **Use of resources:**
Concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion).

The audit planning process and risk assessment is an on-going process and the assessment and fees in this plan will be kept under review and updated if necessary. Any change to our identified risks will be reporting to the Audit & Performance Review Panel.

Financial Statements Audit

Our financial statements audit work follows a four stage audit process which is identified below. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the activities that this includes. This report concentrates on the Financial Statements Audit Planning stage of the Financial Statements Audit.



Value for Money Arrangements Work

Our Value for Money (VFM) Arrangements Work follows a five stage process which is identified below. **Page 9** provides more detail on the activities that this includes. This report concentrates on explaining the VFM approach for 2017/18.

Financial statements audit planning

Financial Statements Audit Planning

Our planning work takes place during December 2017 to February 2018. This involves the following key aspects:

- Determining our materiality level;
- Risk assessment;
- Identification of significant risks;
- Consideration of potential fraud risks;
- Identification of key account balances in the financial statements and related assertions, estimates and disclosures;
- Consideration of management's use or experts; and
- Issuing this audit plan to communicate our audit strategy.

Risk assessment

Auditing standards require us to consider two standard risks for all organisations. We are not elaborating on these standard risks in this plan but consider them as a matter of course in our audit and will include any findings arising from our work in our ISA 260 Report.

01

Management override of controls

Management is typically in a powerful position to perpetrate fraud owing to its ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Our audit methodology incorporates the risk of management override as a default significant risk. In line with our methodology, we carry out appropriate controls testing and substantive procedures, including over journal entries, accounting estimates and significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business, or are otherwise unusual.

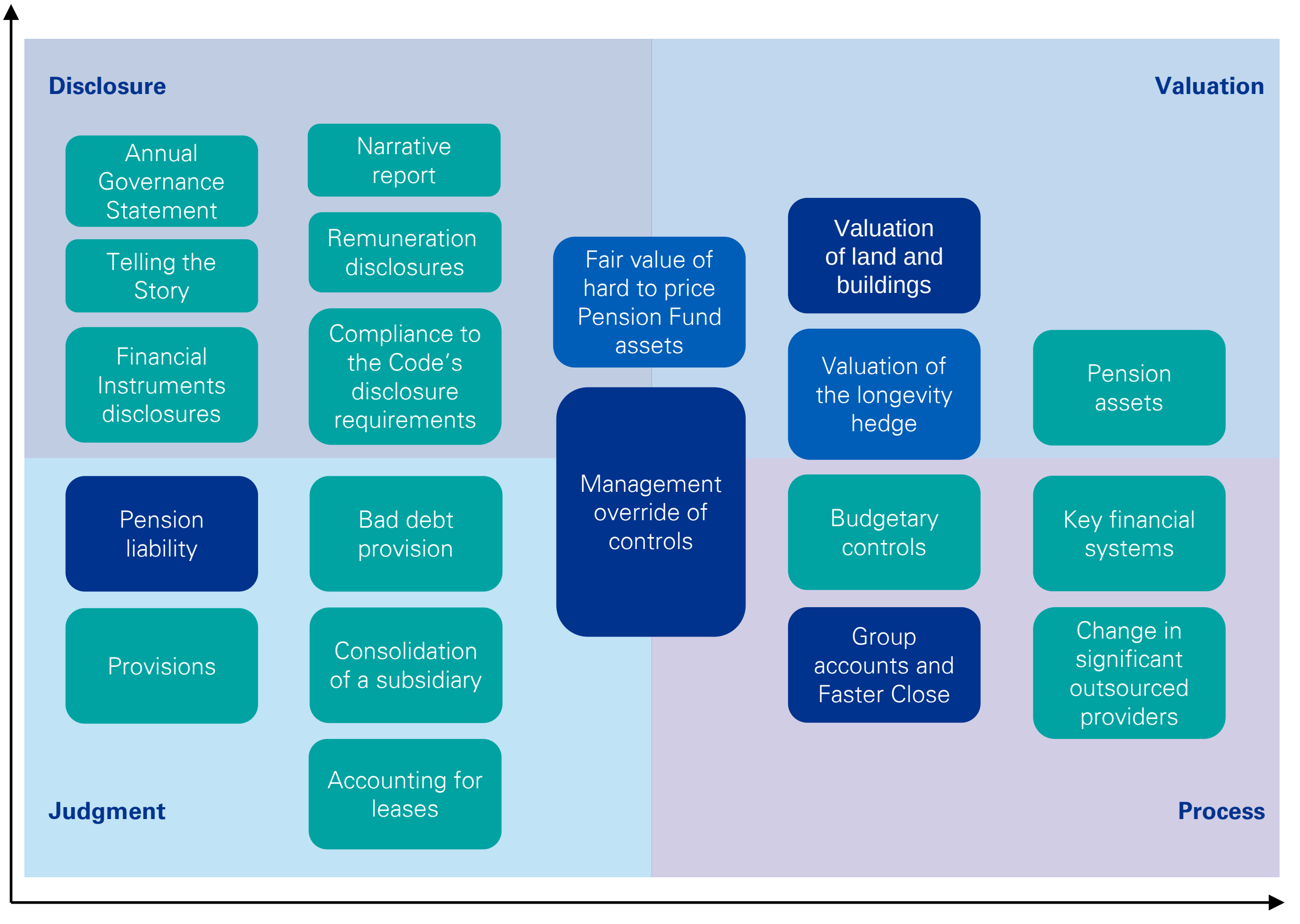
02

Fraudulent revenue recognition

We do not consider this to be a significant risk for local authorities as there are limited incentives and opportunities to manipulate the way income is recognised. We therefore rebut this risk and do not incorporate specific work into our audit plan in this area over and above our standard fraud procedures.

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

The diagram below identifies significant risks and other areas of audit focus, which we expand on overleaf. The diagram also identifies a range of other areas considered by our audit approach.



Keys:

- Significant risk
- Other area of audit focus
- Significant risks – Pension Fund only
- Example other areas considered by our approach

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

Significant Audit Risks – Authority

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error in relation to the Authority.

Risk:	**Valuation of land and buildings** The Code requires that where assets are subject to revaluation, their year end carrying value should reflect the appropriate fair value at that date. The Authority has adopted a rolling revaluation model which sees all land and buildings revalued over a five year cycle. As a result of this, however, individual assets may not be revalued for four years. This creates a risk that the carrying value of those assets not revalued in year differs materially from the year end fair value. In addition, as the valuation is undertaken as at 1 April, there is a risk that the fair value is different at the year end.
Approach:	We will review the approach that the Authority has adopted to assess the risk that assets not subject to valuation are materially misstated and consider the robustness of that approach. We will also assess the risk of the valuation changing materially during the year. In addition, we will consider movement in market indices between revaluation dates and the year end in order to determine whether these indicate that fair values have moved materially over that time. In relation to those assets which have been revalued during the year we will assess the valuer's qualifications, objectivity and independence to carry out such valuations and review the methodology used (including testing the underlying data and assumptions).

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

Significant Audit Risks – Authority (cont.)

Risk:	**Pension Liabilities** The net pension liability represents a material element of the Authority's balance sheet. The Authority is an admitted body of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Find, which had its last triennial valuation completed as at 31 March 2016. This forms an integral basis of the valuation as at 31 March 2018. The valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme relies on a number of assumptions, most notably around the actuarial assumptions, and actuarial methodology which results in the Authority's overall valuation. There are financial assumptions and demographic assumptions used in the calculation of the Authority's valuation, such as the discount rate, inflation rates, mortality rates etc. The assumptions should also reflect the profile of the Authority's employees, and should be based on appropriate data. The basis of the assumptions is derived on a consistent basis year to year, or updated to reflect any changes. There is a risk that the assumptions and methodology used in the valuation of the Authority's pension obligation are not reasonable. This could have a material impact to net pension liability accounted for in the financial statements.
Approach:	As part of our work we will review the controls that the Authority has in place over the information sent to the Scheme Actuary, including the Authority's process and controls with respect to the assumptions used in the valuation. We will also evaluate the competency, objectivity and independence of Barnett Waddingham. We will review the appropriateness of the key assumptions included within the valuation, compare them to expected ranges, and consider the need to make use of a KPMG Actuary. We will review the methodology applied in the valuation by Barnett Waddingham. In addition, we will review the overall Actuarial valuation and consider the disclosure implications in the financial statements.

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

Significant Audit Risks – Authority (cont.)

Risk:

Group accounts and Faster Close

In prior years, the Authority has been required to prepare draft financial statements by 30 June and then final signed accounts by 30 September. For years ending on and after 31 March 2018 however, revised deadlines apply which require draft accounts by 31 May and final signed accounts by 31 July.

During 2016/17, the Authority started to prepare for these revised deadlines and advanced its own accounts production timetable so that draft accounts were ready by June 2017. Whilst this was an advancement on the timetable applied in preceding years, the Authority will be required to produce Group accounts for the first time and further work is required in order to ensure that the statutory deadlines for 2017/18 are met.

In order to meet the revised deadlines, the Authority may need to make greater use of accounting estimates. In doing so, consideration will need to be given to ensuring that these estimates remain valid at the point of finalising the financial statements. In addition, there are a number of logistical challenges that will need to be managed. These include:

- Ensuring that any third parties involved in the production of the accounts (including valuers, actuaries, associates and associate auditors) are aware of the revised deadlines and have made arrangements to provide the output of their work in accordance with this;
- Revising the closedown and accounts production timetable in order to ensure that all working papers and other supporting documentation are available at the start of the audit process;
- Ensuring that the Audit & Performance Review Panel meeting schedules have been updated to permit signing in July; and
- Applying a shorter paper deadline to the July meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Panel meeting in order to accommodate the production of the final version of the accounts and our ISA 260 report.

In the event that the above areas are not effectively managed there is a significant risk that the audit will not be completed by the 31 July deadline.

There is also an increased likelihood that the Audit Certificate (which confirms that all audit work for the year has been completed) may be issued separately at a later date if work is still ongoing in relation to the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts return and the Pension Fund Annual Report. This is not a matter of concern and is not seen as a breach of deadlines.

Approach:

We will continue to liaise with officers in preparation for our audit in order to understand the steps that the Authority is taking in order to ensure it meets the revised deadlines. We will assess the information available from Optalis and Achieving for Children and agree the most efficient method of auditing the figures. We will also look to advance audit work into the interim visit, such as agreeing the accounting treatment of the Authority's stakes in Optalis and Achieving for Children, in order to streamline the year end audit work.

Where there is greater reliance upon accounting estimates we will consider the assumptions used and challenge the robustness of those estimates.

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

Significant Audit Risks – Pension Fund

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error in relation to the Pension Fund.

Risk:

Valuation of hard to price investments

The Pension Fund invests in a wide range of assets and investment funds, some of which are inherently harder to value or do not have publicly available quoted prices, requiring professional judgement or assumptions to be made at year end. The pricing of complex investment assets may also be susceptible to pricing variances given the number of assumptions underlying the valuation.

In the prior year financial statements, £840 million out of a total of £1,992 million of investments, or 42%, were in this harder to price category.

Approach:

As part of our audit of the Pension Fund, we will independently verify a selection of investment asset prices to third party information and obtain independent confirmation on asset existence. We will also test to what extent the Pension Fund has challenged the valuations reported by investment managers for harder to price investments and obtained independent assessment of the figures.

Risk:

Valuation of the longevity hedge

The Pension Fund has in place a longevity insurance policy with ReAssure Ltd to cover a closed group of pensioner members. The Pension Fund pays the policy an annual fixed premium where in return the insurer pays out benefits to the pensioners. The contract is recognised on the Pension Funds' Net Asset Statement and increases in value if the life expectancy of Fund members increases. Therefore, the contract must be kept under regular review to ensure its valuation and disclosure are in accordance with accounting standards.

Approach:

We will consider the Fund's approach to valuing the longevity insurance contract. We will consider whether the disclosures comply with the accounting framework and any developments that occur in the accounting requirements that are applicable for the 2017/18 financial statements.

In addition to the risk set out above, if we receive specific requests from the auditors of other admitted bodies, we are required to support their audits under the protocols put in place by the PSAA for this purpose. If the work they request is over and above that already planned, there will be additional costs arising from this. The Pension Fund can consider recharging these costs to the relevant admitted bodies

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

Materiality

We are required to plan our audit to determine with reasonable confidence whether or not the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An omission or misstatement is regarded as material if it would reasonably influence the user of financial statements. This therefore involves an assessment of the qualitative and quantitative nature of omissions and misstatements.

Generally, we would not consider differences in opinion in respect of areas of judgement to represent 'misstatements' unless the application of that judgement results in a financial amount falling outside of a range which we consider to be acceptable.

For the Authority, materiality for planning purposes has been set at £4.5 million for the Authority's standalone accounts, and at £4.6 million for the group accounts, which in both cases equates to approximately 1.7 percent of gross expenditure.

For the Pension Fund, materiality for planning purposes has been set at £25 million which equates to 1.2 percent of total assets.

We design our procedures to detect errors in specific accounts at a lower level of precision.

Authority Prior Year Gross Expenditure: £269m

Materiality

£4.6m

1.7% of Expenditure

£230k
Misstatements reported to the Audit & Performance Review Panel (2016/17: £230k)

£3.45m
Procedures designed to detect individual errors (2016/17: £3.45m)

£4.6m
Materiality for the financial statements as a whole (2016/17: £4.6m)

Pension Fund Prior Year Gross Assets : £1,991m

Materiality

£25m

1.2% of Gross assets

(2016/17: £25m)

£1.25m
Misstatements reported to the Audit & Performance Review Panel (2016/17: £1.25m)

£18.75m
Procedures designed to detect individual errors (2016/17: £18.75m)

£25m
Materiality for the financial statements as a whole (2016/17: £25m)

Financial statements audit planning (cont.)

Reporting to the Audit & Performance Review Panel

Whilst our audit procedures are designed to identify misstatements which are material to our opinion on the financial statements as a whole, we nevertheless report to the Audit & Performance Review Panel any unadjusted misstatements of lesser amounts to the extent that these are identified by our audit work.

Under ISA 260(UK&I) 'Communication with those charged with governance', we are obliged to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance. ISA 260 (UK&I) defines 'clearly trivial' as matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate and whether judged by any quantitative or qualitative criteria.

In the context of the Authority, we propose that an individual difference could normally be considered to be clearly trivial if it is less than £0.23 million.

In the context of the Pension Fund, we propose that an individual difference could normally be considered to be clearly trivial it is less than £1.25 million.

If management has corrected material misstatements identified during the course of the audit, we will consider whether those corrections should be communicated to the Audit & Performance Review Panel to assist it in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.

We will report:

- Non-Trivial corrected audit misstatements
- Non-trivial uncorrected audit misstatements
- Note 1 — Errors and omissions in disclosure

  (Corrected and uncorrected)

Group audit

This year, we anticipate that the Authority will be producing Group accounts for the first time to include the transactions with Optalis and Achieving for Children, of which the Authority has part-ownership.

We will reassess the significance of these subsidiaries and our audit approach, including any necessary communication with the external auditors of Optalis and Achieving for Children, throughout our audit and will report any changes in our assessment to the Audit & Performance Review Panel.

Value for money arrangements work

VFM audit approach

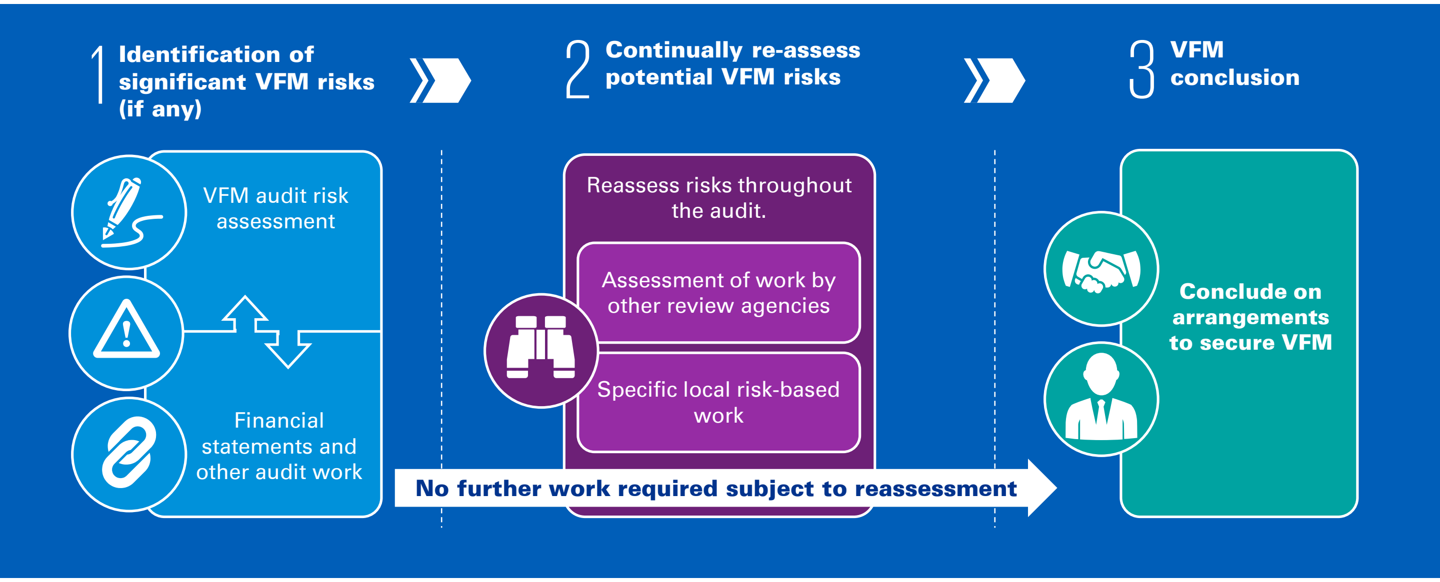
The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires auditors of local government bodies to be satisfied that the authority 'has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources'.

This is supported by the Code of Audit Practice, published by the NAO in April 2015, which requires auditors to 'take into account their knowledge of the relevant local sector as a whole, and the audited body specifically, to identify any risks that, in the auditor's judgement, have the potential to cause the auditor to reach an inappropriate conclusion on the audited body's arrangements.'

Overall criterion

In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

The VFM approach is fundamentally unchanged from that adopted in 2016/17 and the process is shown in the diagram below. The diagram overleaf shows the details of the sub-criteria for our VFM work.



Value for money arrangements work (cont.)

Value for Money sub-criterion

Informed decision making

Proper arrangements:

- Acting in the public interest, through demonstrating and applying the principles and values of sound governance.
- Understanding and using appropriate and reliable financial and performance information to support informed decision making and performance management.
- Reliable and timely financial reporting that supports the delivery of strategic priorities.
- Managing risks effectively and maintaining a sound system of internal control.

Sustainable resource deployment

Proper arrangements:

- Planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions.
- Managing and utilising assets to support the delivery of strategic priorities.
- Planning, organising and developing the workforce effectively to deliver strategic priorities.

Working with partners and third parties

Proper arrangements:

- Working with third parties effectively to deliver strategic priorities.
- Commissioning services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.
- Procuring supplies and services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.

Value for money arrangements work (cont.)

VFM audit stage

VFM audit risk assessment

Audit approach

We consider the relevance and significance of the potential business risks faced by all local authorities, and other risks that apply specifically to the Authority. These are the significant operational and financial risks in achieving statutory functions and objectives, which are relevant to auditors' responsibilities under the *Code of Audit Practice.*

In doing so we consider:

- The Authority's own assessment of the risks it faces, and its arrangements to manage and address its risks;
- Information from the Public Sector Auditor Appointments Limited VFM profile tool;
- Evidence gained from previous audit work, including the response to that work; and
- The work of other inspectorates and review agencies.

Linkages with financial statements and other audit work

Audit approach

There is a degree of overlap between the work we do as part of the VFM audit and our financial statements audit. For example, our financial statements audit includes an assessment and testing of the Authority's organisational control environment, including the Authority's financial management and governance arrangements, many aspects of which are relevant to our VFM audit responsibilities.

We have always sought to avoid duplication of audit effort by integrating our financial statements and VFM work, and this will continue. We will therefore draw upon relevant aspects of our financial statements audit work to inform the VFM audit.

Identification of significant risks

Audit approach

The Code identifies a matter as significant *'if, in the auditor's professional view, it is reasonable to conclude that the matter would be of interest to the audited body or the wider public. Significance has both qualitative and quantitative aspects.'*

If we identify significant VFM risks, then we will highlight the risk to the Authority and consider the most appropriate audit response in each case, including:

- Considering the results of work by the Authority, inspectorates and other review agencies; and
- Carrying out local risk-based work to form a view on the adequacy of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Value for money arrangements work (cont.)

VFM audit stage

Assessment of work by other review agencies, and Delivery of local risk based work

Audit approach

Depending on the nature of the significant VFM risk identified, we may be able to draw on the work of other inspectorates, review agencies and other relevant bodies to provide us with the necessary evidence to reach our conclusion on the risk.

We will also consider the evidence obtained by way of our financial statements audit work and other work already undertaken.

If evidence from other inspectorates, agencies and bodies is not available and our other audit work is not sufficient, we will need to consider what additional work we will be required to undertake to satisfy ourselves that we have reasonable evidence to support the conclusion that we will draw. Such work may include:

- Additional meetings with senior managers across the Authority;
- Review of specific related minutes and internal reports;
- Examination of financial models for reasonableness, using our own experience and benchmarking data from within and without the sector.

Concluding on VFM arrangements

Audit approach

At the conclusion of the VFM audit we will consider the results of the work undertaken and assess the assurance obtained against each of the VFM themes regarding the adequacy of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

If any issues are identified that may be significant to this assessment, and in particular if there are issues that indicate we may need to consider qualifying our VFM conclusion, we will discuss these with management as soon as possible. Such issues will also be considered more widely as part of KPMG's quality control processes, to help ensure the consistency of auditors' decisions.

Reporting

Audit approach

On the following page, we report the results of our initial risk assessment.

We will report on the results of the VFM audit through our ISA 260 Report. This will summarise any specific matters arising, and the basis for our overall conclusion.

The key output from the work will be the VFM conclusion (i.e. our opinion on the Authority's arrangements for securing VFM), which forms part of our audit report.

Value for money arrangements work (cont.)

Significant VFM Risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood that proper arrangements are not in place to deliver value for money.

Risk:	**Delivery of budgets** The Authority identified the need to make savings of £5.95 million in 2017/18. The current forecast shows that the Authority will deliver an overspend of approximately £0.2 million which will be funded out of reserves. The Authority's budget for 2018/19 is being taken to the Council meeting on 20 February and recognises a need for £5.4 million in savings. This will help to address future reductions to local authority funding alongside service cost and demand pressures. As a result, the need for savings will continue to have a significant impact on the Authority's financial resilience.
Approach:	As part of our additional risk based work, we will consider the way in which the Authority identifies, approves, and monitors savings and how budgets are monitored throughout the year. We will also review the controls the Authority has in place to ensure financial resilience, specifically that the Medium Term Financial Plan has duly taken into consideration factors such as funding reductions, salary and general inflation, demand pressures, restructuring costs and sensitivity analysis given the degree of variability in the above factors.
VFM Sub-criterion:	This risk is related to the following Value For Money sub-criterion — Informed decision making; — Sustainable resource deployment; and — Working with partners and third parties
Risk:	**Contract management** As part of its Transformation Programme, the Authority has moved to a new operating model for some services and now delivers Children's Services and Adult Social Care through external providers such as Optalis and Achieving for Children, in which the Authority is a shareholder.
Approach:	We will consider the arrangements in place for managing the contracts, including arrangements for monitoring the performance of the service and verifying the accuracy of costs and payments under the contract.
VFM Sub-criterion:	This risk is related to the following Value For Money sub-criterion — Informed decision making; — Sustainable resource deployment; and — Working with partners and third parties

Other matters

Whole of government accounts (WGA)

We are required to issue an assurance statement to the National Audit Office confirming the income, expenditure, asset and liabilities of the Authority. Deadlines for completion of this for 2017/18 have not yet been confirmed.

Elector challenge

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gives electors certain rights. These are:

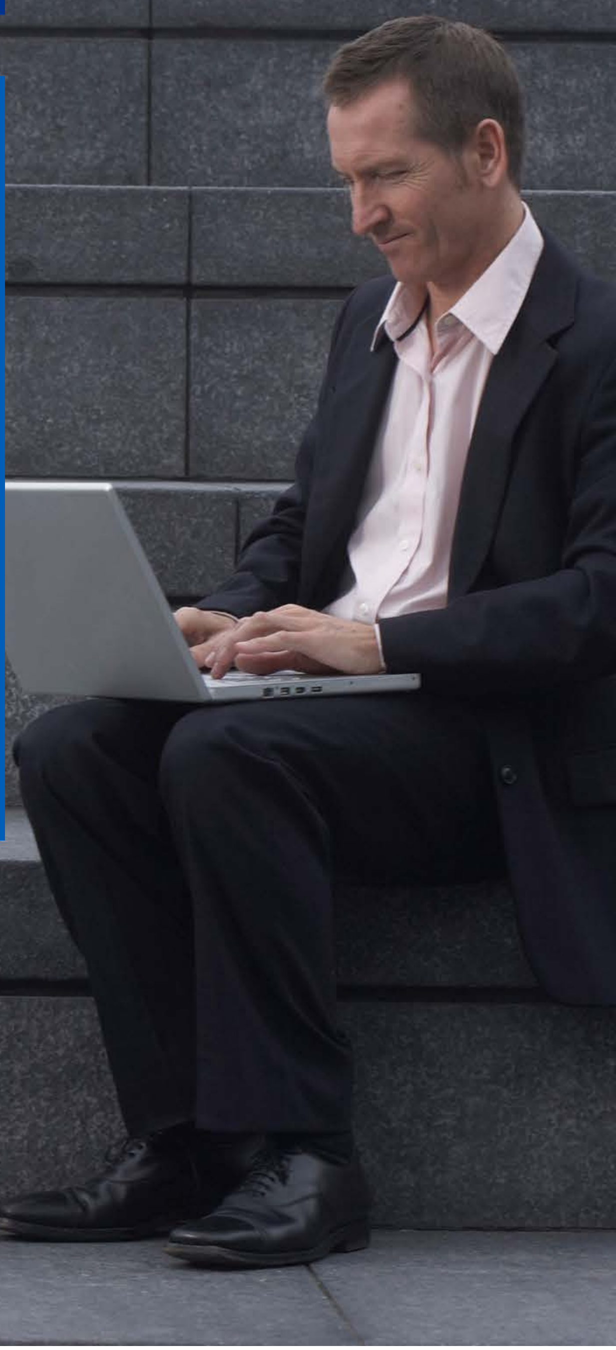
— The right to inspect the accounts;

— The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts; and

— The right to object to the accounts.

As a result of these rights, in particular the right to object to the accounts, we may need to undertake additional work to form our decision on the elector's objection. The additional work could range from a small piece of work where we interview an officer and review evidence to form our decision, to a more detailed piece of work, where we have to interview a range of officers, review significant amounts of evidence and seek legal representations on the issues raised.

The costs incurred in responding to specific questions or objections raised by electors is not part of the fee. This work will be charged in accordance with the PSAA's fee scales.



Other matters

Reporting and communication

Reporting is a key part of the audit process, not only in communicating the audit findings for the year, but also in ensuring the audit team are accountable to you in addressing the issues identified as part of the audit strategy. Throughout the year we will communicate with you through meetings with the finance team and the Audit & Performance Review Panel. Our communication outputs are included in Appendix 1.

Independence and Objectivity

Auditors are also required to be independent and objective. Appendix 3 provides more details of our confirmation of independence and objectivity.

Audit fee

Our Audit Fee Letter 2017/2018 presented to you in April 2017 first set out our fees for the 2017/2018 audit. This letter also set out our assumptions. Should there be a need to charge additional audit fees then this will be agreed with the s.151 Officer and PSAA. If such a variation is agreed, we will report that to you in due course.

The planned audit fee for 2017/18 is £81,803 for the Authority, compared to 2016/17 of £81,803. The planned audit fee for 2017/18 is £24,831 for the Pension Fund (2016/17 £33,755, which includes £8,924 of additional fee for work on behalf of other admitted body auditors and work on the revised longevity hedge model).

Appendix 1:

Key elements of our financial statements audit approach

Driving more value from the audit through data and analytics

Technology is embedded throughout our audit approach to deliver a high quality audit opinion. Use of Data and Analytics (D&A) to analyse large populations of transactions in order to identify key areas for our audit focus is just one element. Data and Analytics allows us to:

— Obtain greater understanding of your processes, to automatically extract control configurations and to obtain higher levels assurance.

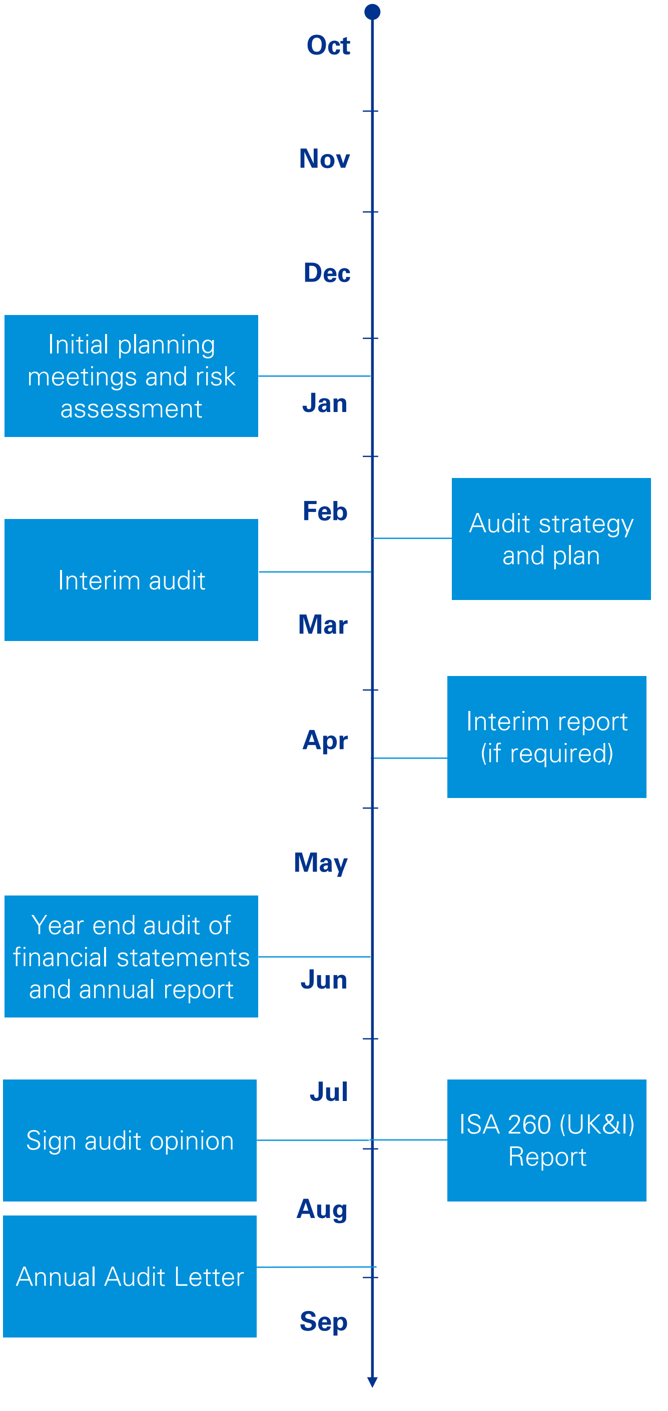
— Focus manual procedures on key areas of risk and on transactional exceptions.

— Identify data patterns and the root cause of issues to increase forward-looking insight.

We anticipate using data and analytics in our work around key areas such as journals.

Communication

Continuous communication involving regular meetings between Audit & Performance Review Panel, Senior Management and audit team.



Appendix 1:

Key elements of our financial statements audit approach (cont.)

Audit workflow

Planning

- Determining our materiality level;
- Risk assessment;
- Identification of significant risks;
- Consideration of potential fraud risks;
- Identification of key account balances in the financial statements and related assertions, estimates and disclosures;
- Consideration of managements use or experts; and
- Issuing this audit plan to communicate our audit strategy.

Control evaluation

- Understand accounting and reporting activities
- Evaluate design and implementation of selected controls
- Test operating effectiveness of selected controls
- Assess control risk and risk of the accounts being misstated

Substantive testing

- Plan substantive procedures
- Perform substantive procedures
- Consider if audit evidence is sufficient and appropriate

Completion

- Perform completion procedures
- Perform overall evaluation
- Form an audit opinion
- Audit & Performance Review Panel reporting

Appendix 2:

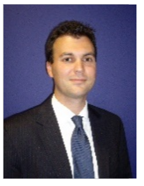
Audit team

Your audit team has been drawn from our specialist public sector assurance department. Darren and Duncan were all part of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead audit last year. Sonya has joined the team this year from our London Public Sector department.

Darren Gilbert
Director

T: +44 (0)2920 468205
E: darren.gilbert@kpmg.co.uk

'My role is to lead our team and ensure the delivery of a high quality, valued added external audit opinion.
I will be the main point of contact for the Audit & Performance Review Panel and Managing Director.'



Duncan Laird
Senior Manager

T: +44 (0)117 905 4253
E: duncan.laird@kpmg.co.uk

'I provide quality assurance for the audit work and specifically any technical accounting and risk areas.
I will work closely with Darren to ensure we add value.
I will liaise with the Head of Finance and other Executive Directors.'

Sonya Patel
In-charge

T: +44 (0)207 694 2726
E: sonya.patel@kpmg.co.uk

'I will be responsible for the on-site delivery of our work and will supervise the work of our audit assistants.'

Appendix 3:

Independence and objectivity requirements

ASSESSMENT OF OUR OBJECTIVITY AND INDEPENDENCE AS AUDITOR OF THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD

Professional ethical standards require us to provide to you at the planning stage of the audit a written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on KPMG LLP's objectivity and independence, the threats to KPMG LLP's independence that these create, any safeguards that have been put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable KPMG LLP's objectivity and independence to be assessed.

In considering issues of independence and objectivity we consider relevant professional, regulatory and legal requirements and guidance, including the provisions of the Code of Audit Practice, the provisions of Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd's ('PSAA's') Terms of Appointment relating to independence and the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard and General Guidance Supporting Local Audit (Auditor General Guidance 1 – AGN01) issued by the National Audit Office ('NAO').

This Appendix is intended to comply with this requirement and facilitate a subsequent discussion with you on audit independence and addresses:

- General procedures to safeguard independence and objectivity;
- Independence and objectivity considerations relating to the provision of non-audit services; and
- Independence and objectivity considerations relating to other matters.

General procedures to safeguard independence and objectivity

KPMG LLP is committed to being and being seen to be independent. As part of our ethics and independence policies, all KPMG LLP partners, Audit Directors and staff annually confirm their compliance with our ethics and independence policies and procedures. Our ethics and independence policies and procedures are fully consistent with the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard. As a result we have underlying safeguards in place to maintain independence through:

- Instilling professional values
- Communications
- Internal accountability
- Risk management
- Independent reviews.

The conclusion of the audit engagement leader as to our compliance with the FRC Ethical Standard in relation to the audit of the Pension Fund and that the safeguards we have applied are appropriate and adequate is subject to review by an engagement quality control reviewer, who is an Audit Director not otherwise involved in your affairs.

We are satisfied that our general procedures support our independence.

Appendix 3:

Independence and objectivity requirements (cont.)

Independence and objectivity considerations relating to the provision of non-audit services

Summary of fees

We have considered the fees charged by us to the authority and its affiliates for professional services provided by us during the reporting period.

We confirm that no non-audit services have been provided to the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund.

Facts and matters related to the provision of non-audit services and the safeguards put in place that bear upon our independence and objectivity, are set out in the following table:

Description of scope of services	Principal threats to independence	Safeguards Applied	Basis of fee	Value of Services Delivered in the year ended 31 March 2018	Value of Services Committed but not yet delivered
Certification of housing benefit grant claim	None identified as this is part of our role as appointed auditor	None requires as no threats identified.	Fixed Fee	11,648	13,439
Certification of other grants & returns (Teachers Pension, National College of Teaching and Leadership Annual Grant Report and Initial Teacher Training Annual Accounts)	Self-Review	The engagements relate to the completion of predefined procedures as set out by the grant paying body. Our report then sets out the factual results of those tests rather than providing an assurance opinion.	Fixed Fee	8,000	8,000

Independence and objectivity considerations relating to other matters

There are no other matters that, in our professional judgment, bear on our independence which need to be disclosed to the Audit & Performance Review Panel.

Confirmation of audit independence

We confirm that as of the date of this report, in our professional judgment, KPMG LLP is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the Audit Director and audit staff is not impaired.

This report is intended solely for the information of the Audit & Performance Review Panel of the authority and should not be used for any other purposes.

We would be very happy to discuss the matters identified above (or any other matters relating to our objectivity and independence) should you wish to do so.

KPMG LLP

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