



AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting: Monday, 16th March 2015 at 18.30 hours
in Civic Suite, North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EP

ADDENDUM

The following item although provided for on the agenda front sheet was not available at the time of dispatch:

7.	KPMG EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN / ANNUAL AUDIT FEE (PAGES 5 - 50) To consider a report from KPMG.
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Yours sincerely

.....
Martin Shields
Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

NOTES

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows –

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Prescribed description</u>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the previous 12 months (up to and including the date of notification of the interest) in respect of any expenses incurred by you carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's area. For this purpose "land" includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the Council's area for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, your spouse or civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the Council's area and

(b) either –

- i. The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
- ii. If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose, “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

NOTE: the requirements in respect of the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and withdrawing from participating in respect of any matter where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest apply to your interests and those of your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner where you are aware of their interest.

Access to Information

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For further details and enquiries about this meeting please contact Tanya Davies, 01452 396125, tanya.davies@gloucester.gov.uk.

For general enquiries about Gloucester City Council’s meetings please contact Democratic Services, 01452 396126, democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk.

If you, or someone you know cannot understand English and need help with this information, or if you would like a large print, Braille, or audio version of this information please call 01452 396396.

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions:

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building; gather at the assembly point in the car park and await further instructions;
- Do not re-enter the building until told by a member of staff or the fire brigade that it is safe to do so.

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cutting through complexity

External Audit Plan 2014/15

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Gloucester City Council

March 2015

Agenda Item 7

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This report is addressed to the Authority and has been prepared for the sole use of the Authority. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. The Audit Commission has issued a document entitled *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies*. This summarises where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from the audited body. We draw your attention to this document which is available on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body's own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Darren Gilbert, the appointed engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact Trevor Rees on 0161 246 4000, or by email to trevor.rees@kpmg.co.uk, who is the national contact partner for all of KPMG's work with the Audit Commission. After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access the Audit Commission's complaints procedure. Put your complaint in writing to the Complaints Unit Manager, Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF or by email to complaints@audit-commission.gsi.gov.uk. Their telephone number is 03034448330.

This document describes
how we will deliver our audit
work for Gloucester City
Council.

Scope of this report

This document supplements our *Audit Fee Letter 2014/15* presented to you in April 2014. It describes how we will deliver our financial statements audit work for Gloucester City Council ('the Authority'). It also sets out our approach to value for money (VFM) work for 2014/15.

We are required to satisfy ourselves that your accounts comply with statutory requirements and that proper practices have been observed in compiling them. We use a risk based audit approach.

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.

Statutory responsibilities

Our statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the *Audit Commission Act 1998* and the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*.

The Audit Commission will close at 31 March 2015. However our audit responsibilities under the *Audit Commission Act 1998* and the *Code of Audit Practice* in respect of the 2014/15 financial year remain unchanged.

The *Code of Audit Practice* summarises our responsibilities into two objectives, requiring us to audit/review and report on your:

- *financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement):* providing an opinion on your accounts; and
- *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 Commission's *Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies* sets out the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the Authority.

The Audit Commission will cease to exist on 31 March 2015. Details of the new arrangements are set out in Appendix 4. The Authority can expect further communication from the Audit Commission and its successor bodies as the new arrangements are established. This plan restricts itself to reference to the existing arrangements.

Structure of this report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 includes our headline messages, including any key risks identified this year for the financial statements audit and Value for Money arrangements Conclusion.
- Section 3 describes the approach we take for the audit of the financial statements.
- Section 4 provides further detail on the financial statements audit risks.
- Section 5 explains our approach to VFM arrangements work.
- Section 6 provides information on the audit team, our proposed deliverables, the timescales and fees for our work.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank officers and Members for their continuing help and co-operation throughout our audit work.

Audit approach	<p>Our overall audit approach remains similar to last year with no fundamental changes. Our work is carried out in four stages and the timings for these, and specifically our on site work, have been agreed with the Head of Finance.</p> <p>Our audit strategy and plan remain flexible as risks and issues change throughout the year. We will review the initial assessments presented in this document throughout the year and should any new risks emerge we will evaluate these and respond accordingly.</p>
Key financial statements audit risks	<p>We have completed our initial risk assessment for the financial statements audit and have identified the following significant risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Housing stock transfer – As a result of the transfer of assets to Gloucester City Homes Ltd, the Authority will need to correctly account for the repayment of long term borrowing previously taken out to finance these assets and the removal of these assets from the Authority’s asset register. This is a potentially complex area with an increased risk of error. <p>This is described in more detail on pages 11. We will assess these risk areas as part of our interim work and conclude this work at year end.</p>
VFM audit approach	<p>We have completed our initial risk assessment for the VFM conclusion and have identified the following significant risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Achievement of the savings plan – The Authority was required to make savings of £1.4m in 2014/15. The current forecast shows that £870k has been achieved or is in progress, with the remaining £530k at risk or unlikely to be achieved. <p>This is described in more detail on page 16. We will assess this risk area as part of our interim work and conclude this work at year end.</p>
Audit team, deliverables, timeline and fees	<p>There has been no change to the audit team from last year. Our main year end audit is currently planned to commence on 20 July. Upon conclusion of our work we will again present our findings to you in our <i>Report to Those Charged with Governance (ISA 260 Report)</i>.</p> <p>The planned fee for the 2014/15 audit is £84,600. This is a reduction of £30,400 from the position set out in our <i>Audit Fee Letter 2014/15</i> and reflects the improvements we have noted in the quality of the financial statements and associated working papers. The fee is now in line with the scale fee set by the Audit Commission.</p>

Section three

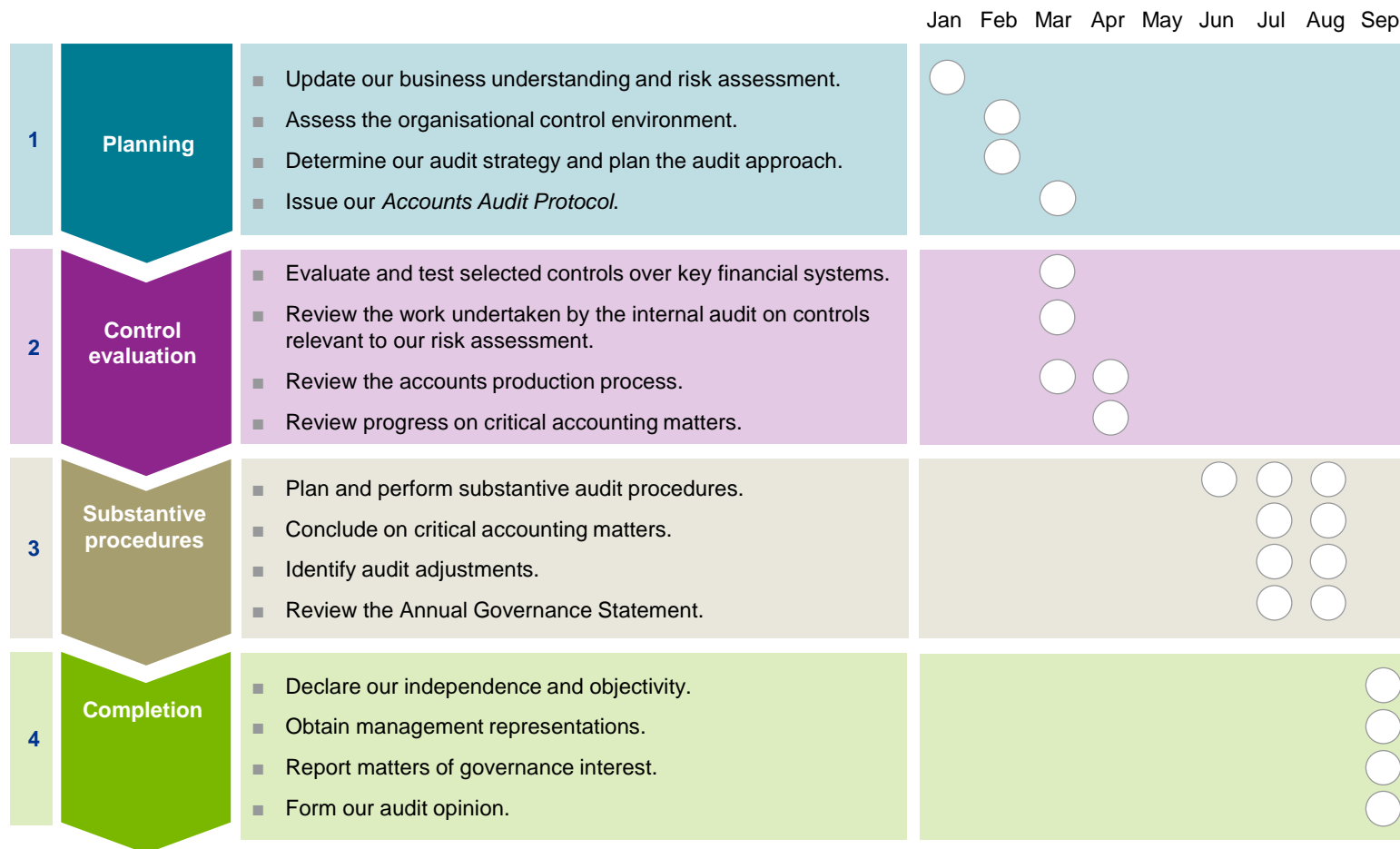
Our audit approach

We undertake our work on your financial statements in four key stages during 2015:

- **Planning** (January to February).
- **Control Evaluation** (March).
- **Substantive Procedures** (July to August).
- **Completion** (September).

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We have summarised the four key stages of our financial statements audit process for you below:



During January and February 2015 we complete our planning work.

We assess the key risks affecting the Authority's financial statements and discuss these with officers.

We assess if there are any weaknesses in respect of central processes that would impact on our audit.

Our planning work takes place in January and February 2015. This involves the following aspects:

Planning

- Update our business understanding and risk assessment including fraud risk.
- Assess the organisational control environment.
- Determine our audit strategy and plan the audit approach.
- Issue our *Accounts Audit Protocol*.

Business understanding and risk assessment

We update our understanding of the Authority's operations and identify any areas that will require particular attention during our audit of the Authority's financial statements.

We identify the key risks including risk of fraud affecting the Authority's financial statements. These are based on our knowledge of the Authority, our sector experience and our ongoing dialogue with Authority staff. Any risks identified to date through our risk assessment process are set out in this document. Our audit strategy and plan will, however, remain flexible as the risks and issues change throughout the year. It is the Authority's responsibility to adequately address these issues. We encourage the Authority to raise any technical issues with us as early as possible so that we can agree the accounting treatment in advance of the audit visit.

We meet with the Head of Finance on a regular basis to consider issues and how they are addressed during the financial year end closedown and accounts preparation.

Organisational control environment

Controls operated at an organisational level often have an impact on controls at an operational level and if there were weaknesses this would impact on our audit.

In particular risk management, internal control and ethics and conduct have implications for our financial statements audit. The scope of the relevant work of your internal auditors also informs our risk assessment.

Audit strategy and approach to materiality

Our audit is performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK and Ireland). The Engagement Lead sets the overall direction of the audit and decides the nature and extent of audit activities. We design audit procedures in response to the risk that the financial statements are materially misstated. The materiality level is a matter of professional judgement and is set by the Engagement Lead.

In accordance with ISA 320 (UK&I) '*Audit materiality*', we plan and perform our audit to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement and give a true and fair view. Information is considered material if its omission or misstatement could influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

Further details on assessment of materiality is set out on page 6 of this document.

When we determine our audit strategy we set a monetary materiality level for planning purposes.

For 2014/15 we have set this at £2 million based on the group accounts.

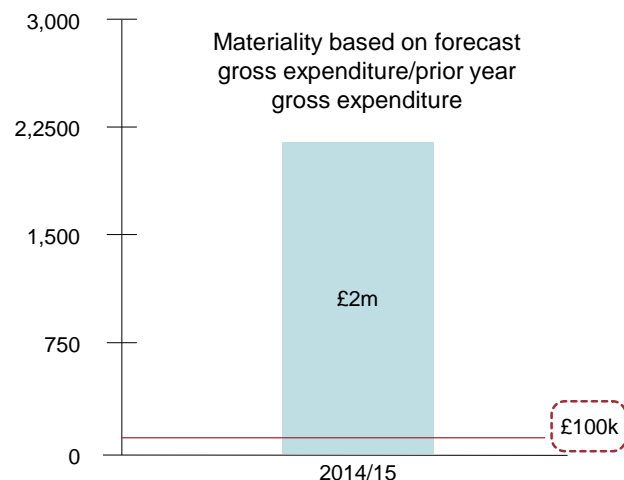
We will report all audit differences over £100k to the Audit & Governance Committee.

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Materiality

The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgment and includes consideration of three aspects: materiality by value, nature and context.

- Material errors by value are those which are simply of significant numerical size to distort the reader's perception of the financial statements. Our assessment of the threshold for this depends upon the size of key figures in the financial statements, as well as other factors such as the level of public interest in the financial statements.
- Errors which are material by nature may not be large in value, but may concern accounting disclosures of key importance and sensitivity, for example the salaries of senior staff.
- Errors that are material by context are those that would alter key figures in the financial statements from one result to another – for example, errors that change successful performance against a target to failure.



Materiality for planning purposes has been set at £1.9 million for the Authority's standalone accounts, and at £2 million for the group accounts, which in both cases equates to approximately 2 percent of gross expenditure.

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

Reporting to the Audit & Governance Committee

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 & Governance Committee any 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.

ISA 450 (UK&I), '*Evaluation of misstatements identified during the audit*', requires us to request that uncorrected misstatements are corrected.

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 £100k.

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

We will report on any significant matters arising from the work of the auditors of Gloucester City Homes Ltd and Gloucestershire Airport Ltd which we seek to rely on to support our audit of the Authority's group accounts.

We will issue our *Accounts audit protocol* following completion of our planning work.

Group audit

In addition to the Authority we anticipate the following subsidiaries and joint ventures to be significant in the context of the group audit:

- Gloucester City Homes Ltd; and
- Gloucestershire Airport Ltd.

Although the Authority's housing assets are expected to transfer to Gloucester City Homes Ltd before the year end, the Authority will need to prepare consolidated accounts to reflect the transactions with Gloucester City Homes Ltd up until the date of transfer.

We will keep this area under review to ensure that the assessment of entities to be consolidated in the group accounts remains appropriate.

To support our audit work on the Authority's group accounts, we anticipate seeking to place reliance on the work of Baker Tilly and Hazlewoods who are the auditors to these bodies. We will liaise with them in order to confirm that their programme of work is adequate for our purposes and they satisfy professional requirements.

We will report the following matters in our *ISA 260 Report*:

- any deficiencies in the system of internal controls or instances of fraud which the subsidiary auditors identify;
- any limitations on the group audit, for example, where the our access to information may have been restricted; and
- any instances where our evaluation of the work the subsidiary auditors gives rise to concern about the quality of that auditor's work.

Accounts audit protocol

At the end of our planning work we will issue our *Accounts Audit Protocol*. This important document sets out our audit approach and timetable. It also summarises the working papers and other evidence we require the Authority to provide during our interim and final accounts visits.

We met with the Head of Finance to discuss mutual learning points from the 2013/14 audit. These will be incorporated into our work plan for 2014/15. We revisit progress against areas identified for development as the audit progresses.

During March 2015 we will complete our interim audit work.

We assess if controls over key financial systems were effective during 2014/15. We work with your internal audit team to avoid duplication.

We work with your finance team to enhance the efficiency of the accounts audit.

We will report any significant findings arising from our work to the Audit & Governance Committee.

Our on site interim visit will be completed during March. During this time we will complete work in the following areas:

Control Evaluation

- Evaluate and test controls over key financial systems identified as part of our risk assessment.
- Review the work undertaken by the internal audit function on controls relevant to our risk assessment.
- Review the accounts production process.
- Review progress on critical accounting matters.

Controls over key financial systems

We update our understanding of the Authority's key financial processes where our risk assessment has identified that these are relevant to our final accounts audit and where we have determined that this is the most efficient audit approach to take. We confirm our understanding by completing walkthroughs for these systems. We then test selected controls that address key risks within these systems. The strength of the control framework informs the substantive testing we complete during our final accounts visit.

Review of internal audit

Where our audit approach is to undertake controls work on financial systems, we seek to review any relevant work internal audit have completed to minimise unnecessary duplication of work. This will inform our overall risk assessment process.

From 1 April 2015, it is anticipated that Internal Audit will be provided by a Shared Internal Audit and Risk Management Service between Gloucester City Council, Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council, to be hosted by Gloucestershire County Council. We will continue to work with IA in its new guise when auditing the 2014/15 year.

Accounts production process

We raised a couple of recommendations in our *ISA 260 Report 2013/14* relating to the accounts production process. The most significant of these was to more formally review whether there are any differences between the carrying amount and the fair value of assets not formally revalued in the period.

We will assess the Authority's progress in addressing our recommendations and in preparing for the closedown and accounts preparation.

We will assess the Authority's progress in addressing our recommendations and in preparing for the closedown and accounts preparation.

Critical accounting matters

We will discuss the work completed to address the specific risks we identified at the planning stage. Wherever possible, we seek to review relevant workings and evidence and agree the accounting treatment as part of our interim work.

If there are any significant findings arising from our interim work we will present these to the Audit & Governance Committee in June 2015.

During July to August 2015 we will be on site for our substantive work.

We complete detailed testing of accounts and disclosures and conclude on critical accounting matters, such as specific risk areas. We then agree any audit adjustments required to the financial statements.

We also review the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our understanding.

We will present our *ISA 260 Report to the Audit & Governance Committee* in September 2015.

Our final accounts visit on site has been provisionally scheduled for the period 20 July to 7 August. During this time, we will complete the following work:

Substantive Procedures

- Plan and perform substantive audit procedures.
- Conclude on critical accounting matters.
- Identify and assess any audit adjustments.
- Review the Annual Governance Statement.

Substantive audit procedures

We complete detailed testing on significant balances and disclosures. The extent of our work is determined by the Engagement Lead based on various factors such as our overall assessment of the Authority's control environment, the effectiveness of controls over individual systems and the management of specific risk factors.

Critical accounting matters

We conclude our testing of key risk areas identified at the planning stage and any additional issues that may have emerged since.

We will discuss our early findings of the Authority's approach to address the key risk areas with the Head of Finance in April 2015, prior to reporting to the Audit & Governance Committee in June 2015.

Audit adjustments

During our on site work, we will meet with the Head of Finance on a weekly basis to discuss the progress of the audit, any differences found and any other issues emerging.

At the end of our on site work, we will hold a closure meeting, where we will provide a schedule of audit differences and agree a timetable for the completion stage and the accounts sign off.

To comply with auditing standards, we are required to report uncorrected audit differences to the Audit & Governance Committee. We also report any material misstatements which have been corrected and which we believe should be communicated to you to help you meet your governance responsibilities.

Annual Governance Statement

We are also required to satisfy ourselves that your Annual Governance Statement complies with the applicable framework and is consistent with our understanding of your operations. Our review of the work of internal audit and consideration of your risk management and governance arrangements are part of this.

We report the findings of our audit of the financial statements work in our *ISA 260 Report*, which we will issue in September 2015.

In addition to the financial statements, we also review the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts pack.

We may need to undertake additional work if we receive objections to the accounts from local electors.

We will communicate with you throughout the year, both formally and informally.

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Whole of government accounts (WGA)

We are required to review your WGA consolidation and undertake the work specified under the approach that is agreed with HM Treasury and the National Audit Office. Deadlines for production of the pack and the specified approach for 2014/15 have not yet been confirmed.

Elector challenge

The Audit Commission Act 1998 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 Audit Commission's fee scales.

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 & Governance Committee. Our deliverables are included on page 19.

Independence and objectivity confirmation

Professional standards require auditors to communicate to those charged with governance, at least annually, all relationships that may bear on the firm's independence and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff. The standards also place requirements on auditors in relation to integrity, objectivity and independence.

The standards define 'those charged with governance' as 'those persons entrusted with the supervision, control and direction of an entity'. In your case this is the Audit & Governance Committee.

KPMG LLP is committed to being and being seen to be independent. APB Ethical Standard 1 *Integrity, Objectivity and Independence* requires us to communicate to you in writing all significant facts and matters, including those related to the provision of non-audit services and the safeguards put in place, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to bear on KPMG LLP's independence and the objectivity of the Engagement Lead and the audit team.

Appendix 1 provides further detail on auditors' responsibilities regarding independence and objectivity.

Confirmation statement

We confirm that as of the date of this report in our professional judgement, KPMG LLP is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the Engagement Lead and audit team is not impaired.

In this section we set out our assessment of the significant risks or other key areas of audit focus of the Authority's financial statements for 2014/15.

For each key risk we have outlined the impact on our audit plan.


Professional 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*.

- 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.
- 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.

Appendix 3 covers more details on our assessment of fraud risk.

The table below sets out the significant risks we have identified through our planning work that are specific to the audit of the Authority's financial statements for 2014/15.

We will revisit our assessment throughout the year and should any additional risks present themselves we will adjust our audit strategy as necessary.

Key audit risks	Impact on audit
	<p>Risk</p> <p>The Authority expects to complete the transfer of its housing assets to Gloucester City Homes Ltd by the year end. As part of this transfer, the Authority will need to correctly account for the repayment of long term borrowing previously taken out to finance these assets and the removal of these assets from the Authority's asset register. This is a potentially complex area and there is consequently an increased risk of error.</p> <p>Our proposed audit work</p> <p>We will review the proposed accounting treatment against the requirements of the Code and guidance from CIPFA and DCLG to confirm that the accounting entries are correct. We will review the documentation and communication with lenders to confirm that the correct sums are being repaid.</p> <p>We will agree the value of assets transferred to Gloucester City Homes Ltd to signed transfer documents, valuers certificates and other supporting documentation and confirm that these have been correctly removed from the Authority's Balance Sheet and accounting records.</p>

Our approach to VFM work follows guidance provided by the Audit Commission.

Background to approach to VFM work

In meeting their statutory responsibilities relating to economy, efficiency and effectiveness, the Commission's *Code of Audit Practice* requires auditors to:

- plan their work based on consideration of the significant risks of giving a wrong conclusion (audit risk); and
- carry out only as much work as is appropriate to enable them to give a safe VFM conclusion.

To provide stability for auditors and audited bodies, the Audit Commission has kept the VFM audit methodology unchanged from last year. There are only relatively minor amendments to reflect the key issues facing the local government sector.

The approach is structured under two themes, as summarised below.

Specified criteria for VFM conclusion	Focus of the criteria	Sub-sections
The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience .	The organisation has robust systems and processes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ manage effectively financial risks and opportunities; and ■ secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Financial governance ■ Financial planning ■ Financial control
The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness .	The organisation is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ achieving cost reductions; and ■ improving efficiency and productivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prioritising resources ■ Improving efficiency and productivity

We will follow a risk based approach to target audit effort on the areas of greatest audit risk.

Overview of the VFM audit approach

The key elements of the VFM audit approach are summarised below.



Each of these stages are summarised further below.

VFM audit stage	Audit approach
VFM audit risk assessment	<p>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 <i>Code of Audit Practice</i>.</p> <p>In doing so we consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Authority's own assessment of the risks it faces, and its arrangements to manage and address its risks; information from the Audit Commission's VFM profile tool ; evidence gained from previous audit work, including the response to that work; and the work of other inspectorates and review agencies.

Our VFM audit will draw heavily on other audit work which is relevant to our VFM responsibilities and the results of last year's VFM audit.

We will then form an assessment of residual audit risk to identify if there are any areas where more detailed VFM audit work is required.

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VFM audit stage	Audit approach
Linkages with financial statements and other audit work	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Assessment of residual audit risk	<p>It is possible that further audit work may be necessary in some areas to ensure sufficient coverage of the two VFM criteria.</p> <p>Such work may involve interviews with relevant officers and /or the review of documents such as policies, plans and minutes. We may also refer to any self assessment the Authority may prepare against the characteristics.</p> <p>To inform any further work we must draw together an assessment of residual audit risk, taking account of the work undertaken already. This will identify those areas requiring further specific audit work to inform the VFM conclusion.</p> <p>At this stage it is not possible to indicate the number or type of residual audit risks that might require additional audit work, and therefore the overall scale of work cannot be easily predicted. If a significant amount of work is necessary then we will need to review the adequacy of our agreed audit fee.</p>
Identification of specific VFM audit work	<p>If we identify residual audit risks, then we will highlight the risk to the Authority and consider the most appropriate audit response in each case, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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.

Where relevant, we may draw upon the range of audit tools and review guides developed by the Audit Commission.

We will conclude on the results of the VFM audit through our ISA 260 Report.

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VFM audit stage	Audit approach
Delivery of local risk based work	<p>Depending on the nature of the residual audit risk identified, we may be able to draw on audit tools and sources of guidance when undertaking specific local risk-based audit work, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ local savings review guides based on selected previous Audit Commission national studies; and ■ update briefings for previous Audit Commission studies. <p>The tools and guides will support our work where we have identified a local risk that is relevant to them. For any residual audit risks that relate to issues not covered by one of these tools, we will develop an appropriate audit approach drawing on the detailed VFM guidance and other sources of information.</p>
Concluding on VFM arrangements	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Reporting	<p>On the following page, we report the results of our initial risk assessment.</p> <p>We will report on the results of the VFM audit through our <i>ISA 260 Report</i>. This will summarise any specific matters arising, and the basis for our overall conclusion.</p> <p>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.</p>

We have identified a specific VFM risk relating to achievement of the savings plan.

We will carry out additional risk-based work to review the Authority's controls to support financial resilience, focusing on the Money Plan.


In line with the risk-based approach set out on the previous page, we have

- assessed the Authority's key business risks which are relevant to our VFM conclusion;
- identified the residual audit risks for our VFM conclusion, taking account of work undertaken in previous years or as part of our financial statements audit;

- considered the results of relevant work by the Authority, the Audit Commission, other inspectorates and review agencies in relation to these risk areas; and
- concluded to what extent we need to carry out additional risk-based work.

Below we set out our preliminary findings in respect of those areas where we have identified a residual audit risk for our VFM conclusion,

We will report our final conclusions in our *ISA 260 Report 2014/15*.

Key VFM risk	Risk description and link to VFM conclusion	Preliminary assessment
	<p>The Authority was required to make savings of £1.4m in 2014/15. The current forecast shows that £870k has been achieved or is in progress, with the remaining £530k at risk or unlikely to be achieved.</p> <p>The Authority currently estimates that £1.4m in savings will need to be achieved during 2015/16. We are aware the Authority is in the process of developing and agreeing proposals with Members for these savings. Further significant savings will be required in 2016/17 and 2017/18 to principally address future reductions to local authority funding alongside service cost and demand pressures. The need for savings will continue to have a significant impact on the Authority's financial resilience.</p>	<p>As part of our additional risk based work, we will review the controls the Authority has in place to ensure financial resilience, specifically that the Money Plan 2015-20 has duly taken into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding reductions; • salary inflation; • general inflation; • demand pressures; • restructuring costs; and • sensitivity analysis given the degree of variability in the above factors.

Your audit team has been drawn from our specialist public sector assurance department. Our audit team were all part of the Gloucester City Council audit last year.

Contact details are shown on page 1.

The audit team will be assisted by other KPMG specialists as necessary.

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Darren Gilbert
Director

"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 & Governance Committee and Managing Director."



Duncan Laird
Manager

"I provide quality assurance for the audit work and specifically any technical accounting and risk areas.

I will work closely with director to ensure we add value.

I will liaise with the Head of Finance and other Executive Directors."

Deliverable	Purpose	Committee dates
Planning		
External Audit Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outlines our audit approach. ■ Identifies areas of audit focus and planned procedures. 	March 2015
Control evaluation		
Interim Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Details control and process issues. ■ Identifies improvements required prior to the issue of the draft financial statements and the year-end audit. 	June 2015
Substantive procedures		
Report to Those Charged with Governance (ISA 260 Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Details the resolution of key audit issues. ■ Communicates adjusted and unadjusted audit differences. ■ Highlights performance improvement recommendations identified during our audit. ■ Comments on the Authority's value for money arrangements. 	September 2015
Completion		
Auditor's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides an opinion on your accounts (including the Annual Governance Statement). ■ Concludes on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the VFM conclusion). 	September 2015
Whole of Government Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide our assurance statement on the Authority's WGA pack submission. 	September 2015
Annual Audit Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Summarises the outcomes and the key issues arising from our audit work for the year. 	November 2015

We will be in continuous dialogue with you throughout the audit.

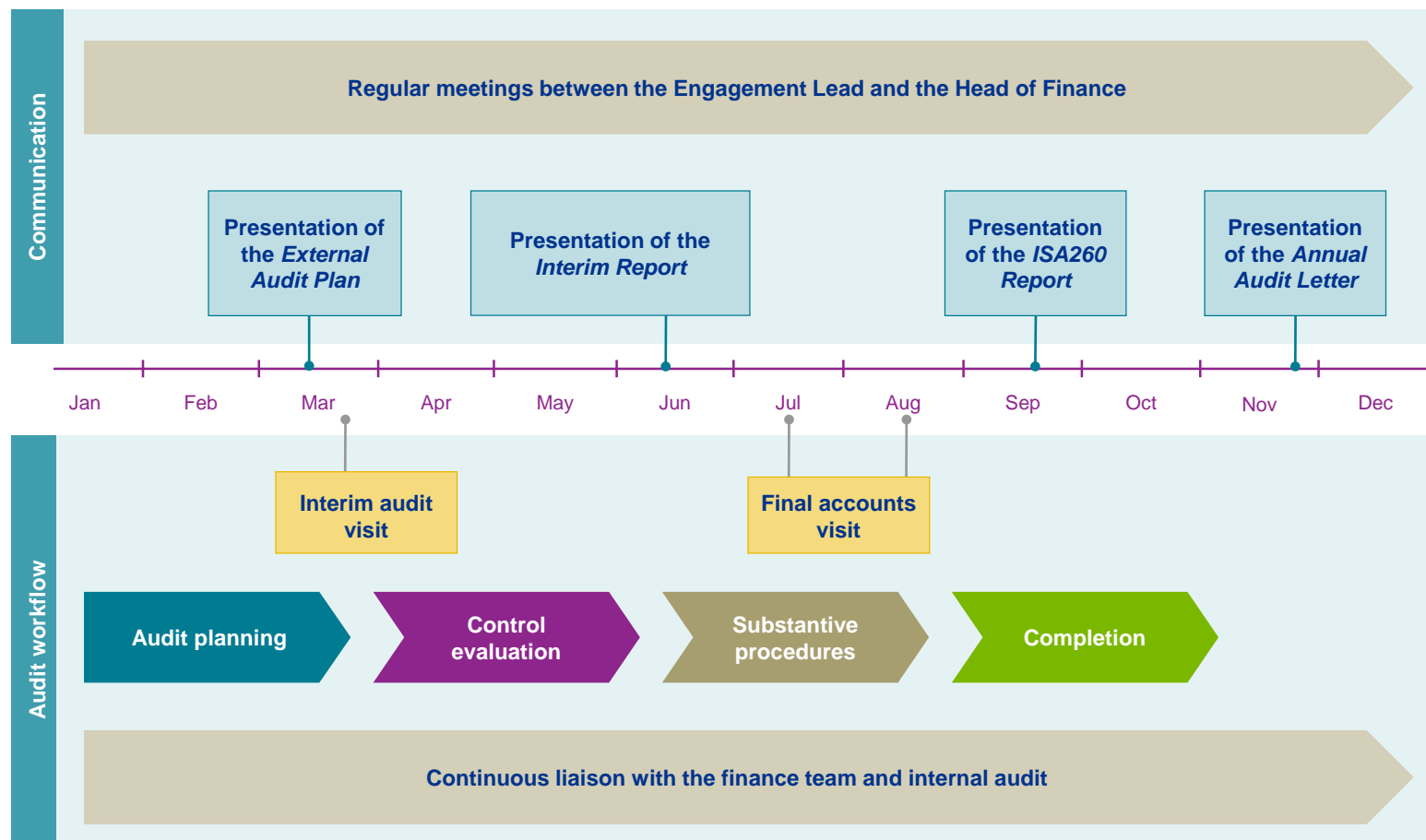
Key formal interactions with the Audit & Governance Committee are:

- March – External Audit Plan;
- June – Interim Report
- September – ISA 260 Report;
- November – Annual Audit Letter.

We work with the finance team and internal audit throughout the year.

Our main work on site will be our:

- Interim audit visits during March.
- Final accounts audit during July and August.



Key: ● Audit & Governance Committee meetings.

The fee for the 2014/15 audit of the Authority is £84,600. This is a reduction of £30,400 from the position set out in our *Audit Fee Letter 2014/15* and reflects the improvements we have noted in the quality of the financial statements and associated working papers. The fee is now in line with the scale fee set by the Audit Commission.

Our audit fee remains indicative and based on you meeting our expectations of your support.

Meeting these expectations will help the delivery of our audit within the proposed audit fee.

Audit fee

Our *Audit Fee Letter 2014/15* presented to you in April 2014 first set out our fees for the 2014/15 audit.

The planned audit fee for 2014/15 is **£84,600**. This is a reduction of £30,400 from 2013/14 and the position set out in our *Audit Fee Letter 2014/15* and reflects the improvements we have noted in the quality of the financial statements and associated working papers. The fee is now in line with the scale fee set by the Audit Commission.

Our audit fee includes our work on the VFM conclusion and our audit of the Authority's financial statements.

Audit fee assumptions

The fee is based on a number of assumptions, including that you will provide us with complete and materially accurate financial statements, with good quality supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes. It is imperative that you achieve this. If this is not the case and we have to complete more work than was envisaged, we will need to charge additional fees for this work. In setting the fee, we have assumed:

- the level of risk in relation to the audit of the financial statements is not significantly different from that identified for 2014/15;
- you will inform us of any significant developments impacting on our audit;
- you will identify and implement any changes required under the *CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2014/15* within your 2014/15 financial statements;
- you will comply with the expectations set out in our *Accounts Audit Protocol*, including:
 - the financial statements are made available for audit in line with the agreed timescales;
 - good quality working papers and records will be provided at the start of the final accounts audit;

- requested information will be provided within the agreed timescales;
- prompt responses will be provided to queries and draft reports;
- internal audit meets appropriate professional standards;
- internal audit adheres to our joint working protocol and completes appropriate work on all systems that provide material figures for the financial statements and we can place reliance on them for our audit; and
- additional work will not be required to address questions or objections raised by local government electors or for special investigations such as those arising from disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Meeting these expectations will help ensure the delivery of our audit within the agreed audit fee.

The Audit Commission requires us to inform you of specific actions you could take to keep the audit fee low. Future audit fees can be kept to a minimum if the Authority achieves an efficient and well-controlled financial closedown and accounts production process which complies with good practice and appropriately addresses new accounting developments and risk areas.

Changes to the audit plan

Changes to this plan and the audit fee may be necessary if:

- new significant audit risks emerge;
- additional work is required of us by the Audit Commission or other regulators; and
- additional work is required as a result of changes in legislation, professional standards or financial reporting requirements.

If changes to this plan and the audit fee are required, we will discuss and agree these initially with the Head of Finance.

This appendix summarises auditors' responsibilities regarding independence and objectivity.

Independence and objectivity

Auditors are required by the Code to:

- carry out their work with independence and objectivity;
- exercise their professional judgement and act independently of both the Commission and the audited body;
- maintain an objective attitude at all times and not act in any way that might give rise to, or be perceived to give rise to, a conflict of interest; and
- resist any improper attempt to influence their judgement in the conduct of the audit.

In addition, the Code specifies that auditors should not carry out work for an audited body that does not relate directly to the discharge of the auditors' functions under the Code. If the Authority invites us to carry out risk-based work in a particular area, which cannot otherwise be justified to support our audit conclusions, it will be clearly differentiated as work carried out under section 35 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

The Code also states that the Commission issues guidance under its powers to appoint auditors and to determine their terms of appointment. The Standing Guidance for Auditors includes several references to arrangements designed to support and reinforce the requirements relating to independence, which auditors must comply with. These are as follows:

- Auditors and senior members of their staff who are directly involved in the management, supervision or delivery of Commission-related work, and senior members of their audit teams should not take part in political activity.
- No member or employee of the firm should accept or hold an appointment as a member of an audited body whose auditor is, or is proposed to be, from the same firm. In addition, no member or employee of the firm should accept or hold such appointments at related bodies, such as those linked to the audited body through a strategic partnership.

- Audit staff are expected not to accept appointments as Governors at certain types of schools within the local authority.
- Auditors and their staff should not be employed in any capacity (whether paid or unpaid) by an audited body or other organisation providing services to an audited body whilst being employed by the firm.
- Firms are expected to comply with the requirements of the Commission's protocols on provision of personal financial or tax advice to certain senior individuals at audited bodies, independence considerations in relation to procurement of services at audited bodies, and area wide internal audit work.
- Auditors appointed by the Commission should not accept engagements which involve commenting on the performance of other Commission auditors on Commission work without first consulting the Commission.
- Auditors are expected to comply with the Commission's policy for the Engagement Lead to be changed on a periodic basis.
- Audit suppliers are required to obtain the Commission's written approval prior to changing any Engagement Lead in respect of each audited body.
- Certain other staff changes or appointments require positive action to be taken by Firms as set out in the standing guidance.

We continually focus on delivering a high quality audit.

This means building robust quality control procedures into the core audit process rather than bolting them on at the end, and embedding the right attitude and approaches into management and staff.

KPMG's Audit Quality Framework consists of seven key drivers combined with the commitment of each individual in KPMG.

The diagram summarises our approach and each level is expanded upon.

At KPMG we consider audit quality is not just about reaching the right opinion, but how we reach that opinion. KPMG views the outcome of a quality audit as the delivery of an appropriate and independent opinion in compliance with the auditing standards. It is about the processes, thought and integrity behind the audit report. This means, above all, being independent, compliant with our legal and professional requirements, and offering insight and impartial advice to you, our client.

KPMG's Audit Quality Framework consists of seven key drivers combined with the commitment of each individual in KPMG. We use our seven drivers of audit quality to articulate what audit quality means to KPMG.

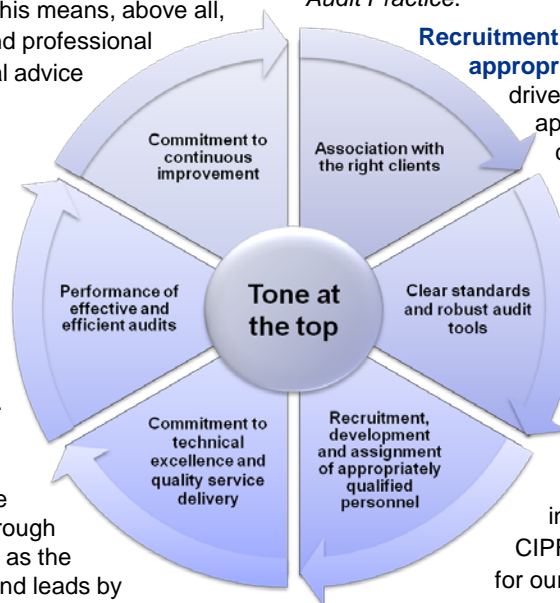
We believe it is important to be transparent about the processes that sit behind a KPMG audit report, so you can have absolute confidence in us and in the quality of our audit.

Tone at the top: We make it clear that audit quality is part of our culture and values and therefore non-negotiable. Tone at the top is the umbrella that covers all the drives of quality through a focused and consistent voice. Darren Gilbert as the Engagement Lead sets the tone on the audit and leads by example with a clearly articulated audit strategy and commits a significant proportion of his time throughout the audit directing and supporting the team.

Association with right clients: We undertake rigorous client and engagement acceptance and continuance procedures which are vital to the ability of KPMG to provide high-quality professional services to our clients.

Clear standards and robust audit tools: We expect our audit professionals to adhere to the clear standards we set and we provide a range of tools to support them in meeting these expectations. The global rollout of KPMG's eAudIT application has significantly enhanced existing audit functionality. eAudIT enables KPMG to deliver a highly

technically enabled audit. All of our staff have a searchable data base, Accounting Research Online, that includes all published accounting standards, the KPMG Audit Manual Guidance as well as other relevant sector specific publications, such as the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*.



Recruitment, development and assignment of appropriately qualified personnel: One of the key drivers of audit quality is assigning professionals appropriate to the Authority's risks. We take great care to assign the right people to the right clients based on a number of factors including their skill set, capacity and relevant experience.

We have a well developed technical infrastructure across the firm that puts us in a strong position to deal with any emerging issues. This includes:

- A national public sector technical director who has responsibility for co-ordinating our response to emerging accounting issues, influencing accounting bodies (such as CIPFA) as well as acting as a sounding board for our auditors.
- A national technical network of public sector audit professionals is established that meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by our national technical director.
- All of our staff have a searchable data base, Accounting Research Online, that includes all published accounting standards, the KPMG Audit Manual Guidance as well as other relevant sector specific publications, such as the Audit Commission's *Code of Audit Practice*.
- A dedicated Department of Professional Practice comprised of over 100 staff that provide support to our audit teams and deliver our web-based quarterly technical training.

We continually focus on delivering a high quality audit.

This means building robust quality control procedures into the core audit process rather than bolting them on at the end, and embedding the right attitude and approaches into management and staff.

Quality must build on the foundations of well trained staff and a robust methodology.

Commitment to technical excellence and quality service delivery:

Our professionals bring you up- the-minute and accurate technical solutions and together with our specialists are capable of solving complex audit issues and delivering valued insights.

Our audit team draws upon specialist resources including Forensic, Corporate Finance, Transaction Services, Advisory, Taxation, Actuarial and IT. We promote technical excellence and quality service delivery through training and accreditation, developing business understanding and sector knowledge, investment in technical support, development of specialist networks and effective consultation processes.

Performance of effective and efficient audits: We understand that how an audit is conducted is as important as the final result. Our drivers of audit quality maximise the performance of the engagement team during the conduct of every audit. We expect our people to demonstrate certain key behaviors in the performance of effective and efficient audits. The key behaviors that our auditors apply throughout the audit process to deliver effective and efficient audits are outlined below:

- timely Engagement Lead and manager involvement;
- critical assessment of audit evidence;
- exercise of professional judgment and professional scepticism;
- ongoing mentoring and on the job coaching, supervision and review;
- appropriately supported and documented conclusions;
- if relevant, appropriate involvement of the Engagement Quality Control reviewer (EQC review);
- clear reporting of significant findings;
- insightful, open and honest two-way communication with those charged with governance; and
- client confidentiality, information security and data privacy.

Commitment to continuous improvement: We employ a broad range of mechanisms to monitor our performance, respond to feedback and understand our opportunities for improvement.

Our quality review results

We are able to evidence the quality of our audits through the results of Audit Commission reviews. The Audit Commission publishes information on the quality of work provided by KPMG (and all other firms) for audits undertaken on behalf of them (<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/audit-regime/audit-quality-review-programme/principal-audits/kpmg-audit-quality>).

The latest Annual Regulatory Compliance and Quality Report (issued June 2014) showed that we are meeting the Audit Commission's overall audit quality and regularity compliance requirements.

We are required to consider fraud and the impact that this has on our audit approach.

We will update our risk assessment throughout the audit process and adapt our approach accordingly.

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Members /Officers responsibilities

- Adopt sound accounting policies.
- With oversight from those charged with governance, establish and maintain internal control, including controls to prevent, deter and detect fraud.
- Establish proper tone/culture/ethics.
- Require periodic confirmation by employees of their responsibilities.
- Take appropriate action in response to actual, suspected or alleged fraud.
- Disclose to Audit & Governance Committee and auditors:
 - any significant deficiencies in internal controls.
 - any fraud involving those with a significant role in internal controls.

KPMG's identification of fraud risk factors

- Review of accounting policies.
- Results of analytical procedures.
- Procedures to identify fraud risk factors.
- Discussion amongst engagement personnel.
- Enquiries of management, Audit & Governance Committee, and others.
- Evaluate controls that prevent, deter, and detect fraud.

KPMG's response to identified fraud risk factors

- Accounting policy assessment.
- Evaluate design of mitigating controls.
- Test effectiveness of controls.
- Address management override of controls.
- Perform substantive audit procedures.
- Evaluate all audit evidence.
- Communicate to Audit & Governance Committee and management.

KPMG's identified fraud risk factors

- We will monitor the following areas throughout the year and adapt our audit approach accordingly.
 - Revenue recognition.
 - Management override of controls.

Appendix 4: Transfer of Audit Commissions' functions

The Audit Commission will be writing to audited bodies and other stakeholders in the coming months with more information about the transfer of the Commissions' regulatory and other functions.

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From 1 April 2015 a transitional body, Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), established by the Local Government Association (LGA) as an independent company, will oversee the Commission's audit contracts until they end in 2017 (or 2020 if extended by DCLG). PSAA's responsibilities will include setting fees, appointing auditors and monitoring the quality of auditors' work. The responsibility for making arrangements for publishing the Commission's value for money profiles tool will also transfer to PSAA.

From 1 April 2015, the Commission's other functions will transfer to new organisations:

- responsibility for publishing the statutory Code of Audit Practice and guidance for auditors will transfer to the National Audit Office (NAO) for audits of the accounts from 2015/16;
- the Commission's responsibilities for local value for money studies will also transfer to the NAO; and
- the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) will transfer to the Cabinet Office.



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External audit technical update

Gloucester City Council

March 2015

This report highlights the main technical issues which are currently having an impact in local government.

If you require any additional information regarding the issues included within this report, please contact a member of the audit team.

We have flagged the articles that we believe will have an impact at the Authority and given our perspective on the issue:

- High impact
- Medium impact
- Low impact
- For info

KPMG RESOURCES					
KPMG/Shelter report: Fix the housing shortage or see house prices quadruple in 20 years					3
TECHNICAL UPDATE					
National Audit Office consultation: Draft Code of Audit Practice for the audit of local public bodies	●	5	The Audit Commission publish the Protecting the Public Purse 2014 (PPP 2014) report.	●	10
Invitation to Comment and Simplification and Streamlining the Presentation of Local Authority Financial Statements	●	5	VFM profiles updated for the 2014/15 data sourced from DCLG	●	11
Audit commission consultation for the 2015/16 proposed work programme and scale fees	●	6	NAO published a report examining the progress to date on the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF)	●	12
Transfer of Audit Commission responsibilities from 1 April 2015	●	7	NAO have published two complementary reports examining local authority finances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial Sustainability of local authorities 2014 and; The impact of funding reductions in local authorities 	●	13
Audit commission consultation on supplementary fee for the 2014/15 accounts – work on business rates	●	8			
The Audit Commission has updated the guidance for auditors on the conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money (VFM) for 2014/15 local VFM work.	●	9	Audit Commission publish: an update on Council tax and business rates collection.	●	14
APPENDIX					
Appendix 1 – 2014/15 audit deliverables					16



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KPMG resources

Area	Comments
<p>KPMG/Shelter report: Fix the housing shortage or see house prices quadruple in 20 years</p> <p>Page 36</p>	<p>Without a radical programme of house building, average house prices in England could double in just ten years to £446,000, according to new research. In twenty years they could quadruple, with the average house price estimated to rise to over £900,000 by 2034 if current trends continue.</p> <p>The research from KPMG and Shelter also reveals that more than half of all 20-34 year olds could be living with their parents by 2040, as soaring housing costs caused by the shortage of affordable homes leave more and more people priced out of a home of their own.</p> <p>The warning comes as KPMG and Shelter launch a landmark new report, outlining how the 2015 government can turn the tide on the nation's housing shortage within a single parliament. With recent government figures showing that homeownership in England has been falling for over a decade, the consequences of our housing shortage are already being felt.</p> <p>The report sets out a blueprint for the essential reforms that will increase the supply of affordable homes and stabilise England's rollercoaster housing market. It calls on politicians to commit to an integrated range of key measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Giving planning authorities the power to create 'New Homes Zones' that would drive forward the development of new homes. Combined with infrastructure, this would be led by local authorities, the private sector and local communities, and self-financed by sharing in the rising value of the land. ■ Unlocking stalled sites to speed up development and stop land being left dormant, by charging council tax on the homes that should have been built after a reasonable period for construction has passed. ■ Introducing a new National Housing Investment Bank to provide low cost, long term loans for housing providers, as part of a programme of innovative ways to finance affordable house building. ■ Helping small builders to get back into the house building market by using government guarantees to improve access to finance. ■ Fully integrating new homes with local infrastructure and putting housing at the very centre of City Deals, to make sure towns and cities have the power to build the homes their communities need. <p>To read the report, visit https://portal.ema.kworld.kpmg.com/uk/Documents/NewsroomDocs/2014/KPMG%20Shelter%20report%20FINAL.pdf.</p> <p>For more information, please contact a member of the audit team.</p>




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Technical update

Area	Level of Impact	Comments	KPMG perspective
National Audit Office consultation: Draft Code of Audit Practice for the audit of local public bodies	● Medium	<p>On Friday 19 September 2014 the National Audit Office (NAO) launched its consultation on the draft Code of Audit Practice for the audit of local public bodies. Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Code will take effect from 1 April 2015 for audit work relating to the 2015/16 financial year onwards.</p> <p>The NAO is seeking views and comments on the draft Code. In particular, the views of audited bodies are being sought on how valuable the work carried out each year on value-for-money arrangements is. The closing date for consultation responses was Friday 31 October 2014.</p> <p>For more information visit http://www.nao.org.uk/keep-in-touch/our-surveys/consultation-code-audit-practice/</p>	<i>The committee may wish to enquire of officers whether they responded to the consultation and the details of any response.</i>
Invitation to Comment and Simplification and Streamlining the Presentation of Local Authority Financial Statements	● Medium	<p>CIPFA and CIPFA/LASAAC have recently consulted on the Simplification and streamlining of the presentation of local authority financial statements.</p> <p>The consultation focused on the reporting of local authority performance and therefore on the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, the movement in reserves statement and the segmental reporting requirements specified in the Code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom. As an important part of reporting performance, it also considered the narrative reporting requirements which would accompany the financial statements.</p> <p>The consultation closed on 19 September 2014.</p>	<i>The committee may wish to enquire of officers whether they responded to the consultation and the details of any response.</i>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments	KPMG perspective
<p>Audit commission consultation for the 2015/16 proposed work programme and scale fees.</p> <p>Page 39</p>	<p>● Low</p>	<p>On the 13th October 2014 The Audit Commission published for consultation the 2015/16 proposed work programme and scales of fees.</p> <p>Separate documents cover the Commission's work programme at local government and police bodies, and at health bodies. The consultation sets out the work that auditors will undertake at principal audited bodies for 2015/16, with the associated scales of fees. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has asked the Audit Commission to set fees for 2015/16 before the Commission's closure on 31 March 2015.</p> <p>They are proposing to reduce scale fees by a further 25 per cent from 2015/16. They do not plan to make changes to the overall work programme. The fee reduction will apply to all principal bodies, with the exception of 15 local government bodies whose scale audit fees are already below £20,000, and of the fees for pension fund audits at local authorities.</p> <p>The 25 per cent fee reduction has been achieved as a result of the recent procurement exercise to retender the work undertaken under the older contracts with audit firms, and is in addition to the 40 per cent cut in fees made by the Commission in 2012. These savings are part of the legacy the Commission will leave behind after March 2015, with the lowest total audit fees for 25 years.</p> <p>The Commission is also making further rebates in respect of audit fees to audited bodies, returning another £6 million to most principal bodies, excluding CCGs.</p> <p>The rebates will be paid by cheque directly to audited bodies in October 2014. The rebates result from the efficient management of the Commission's closure. The Commission's Board will consider in March 2015 the amount of any final rebate on audit fees.</p> <p>The consultation closes on Friday 9 January 2015. The Commission will publish the final work programme and scales of fees for 2015/16 in March 2015.</p> <p>The consultation documents, and the lists of individual scale fees, are available on the Audit Commission website: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/audit-regime/audit-fees/201516propwpsf/</p>	<p><i>The committee may wish to enquire of officers whether they responded to the consultation and the details of any response.</i></p>


Area	Level of Impact	Comments	KPMG perspective
Transfer of Audit Commission responsibilities from 1 April 2015 <div>Page 40</div>	 Low	<p>The work that auditors will carry out on 2015/16 accounts will be completed under the new Code of Audit Practice that the National Audit Office (NAO) is developing. Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 the Commission's responsibility to prepare and publish a Code transfers to the NAO.</p> <p>From 1 April 2015, Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), set up by the Local Government Association as an independent company, will oversee the Audit Commission's audit contracts until they end in 2017, or 2020 if extended by DCLG. PSAA's responsibilities will include setting fees, appointing auditors and monitoring the quality of auditors' work. The responsibility for making arrangements for housing benefit subsidy certification and for publishing the Commission's value for money profiles tool will also transfer to PSAA.</p> <p>The Commission's other functions will also transfer to new organisations, with local value for money studies as well as responsibility for the Code of Audit Practice transferring to the National Audit Office, the National Fraud Initiative to the Cabinet Office, and the counter-fraud functions to Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA).</p> <p>The Audit Commission will be writing to audited bodies and other stakeholders in the coming months with more information about the transfer of the Commission's functions and where to find details on specific questions.</p>	<p><i>The committee may wish to enquire of officers whether they have received any such communications from the Audit Commission and the details of any response.</i></p>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments	KPMG perspective
<p>Audit commission consultation on supplementary fee for the 2014/15 accounts – work on business rates</p> <p>Page 41</p>	<p>● Low</p>	<p>The Audit Commission recently consulted on a supplementary fee for the audit of the accounts for 2014/15 for audit work required on business rates. The consultation applies to district, unitary, metropolitan borough and London borough councils. The consultation closed on Friday 7 November 2014.</p> <p>Auditors are no longer required to undertake certification work for the Department of Communities and Local Government on national non-domestic rates, following the introduction in April 2013 of new arrangements for collecting and distributing business rates. In completing their work on the financial statements of applicable councils, auditors previously placed reliance on their certification work on national non-domestic rates. In the absence of this work, auditors need to undertake additional audit procedures on material business rates balances and disclosures in the financial statements.</p> <p>The additional audit work requires a small additional fee for applicable councils, equivalent to half the average cost by council type of the relevant certification work undertaken in 2012/13. The additional fee by council type is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ district councils : £900; ■ London borough councils: £2,600; ■ metropolitan borough councils: £1,470; and ■ unitary authorities: £1,070. <p>The additional fee represents a net saving to councils of half the average previous certification fees by council type. Following consultation, the additional fee will be added to the scale audit fee for 2014/15 onwards.</p>	<p><i>The committee may wish to enquire of officers whether they responded to the consultation and the details of any response.</i></p>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments
<p>The Audit Commission has updated the guidance for auditors on the conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money (VFM) for 2014/15 local VFM work.</p>	<p>● For information</p>	<p>The Audit Commission has updated the guidance for auditors on the conclusion on arrangements to secure value for money (VFM) for 2014/15 local VFM work. The guidance supports auditors' work on arrangements to secure VFM at the following types of audited body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NHS trusts; ■ clinical commissioning groups (CCGs); ■ single-tier, county and district councils; ■ fire and rescue authorities; ■ the Greater London Authority, the London Legacy Development Corporation and Transport for London; ■ police bodies; and ■ other local government bodies. <p>The key principles underpinning the Commission's approach on the conclusion on arrangements to secure VFM continue to be that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ enables auditors to fulfil their responsibility under the Audit Commission Act 1998, relating to an audited body's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and ■ is applied proportionately to reflect the size, capacity and performance of different types of audited body and, as far as possible, consistently across all sectors of the Commission's regime. <p>The main changes in the update for 2013/14 are set out in section 1.1 of the guidance. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sections 1 and 2 updated to reflect changes relating to the Commission's closure in March 2015; ■ sector context and risk indicators updated for sections 3 to 6; ■ section 4 on Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) updated to apply the specified reporting criteria, recognising that 2014/15 represents CCGs' second full year of operations; and ■ section 8 on reporting updated to emphasise further the type of conclusions that can be issued at different bodies, and when these may or may not be appropriate. <p>The updated guidance is now available on the Audit Commission's website: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/audit-regime/codes-of-audit-practice/value-for-money-conclusion/</p>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments
<p>The Audit Commission publish the <i>Protecting the Public Purse 2014 (PPP 2014)</i> report.</p> <p>Page 43</p>	<p>●</p> <p>For information</p>	<p>On 23 October 2014 the Audit Commission published the <i>Protecting the Public Purse 2014 (PPP 2014)</i> report. PPP 2014 is for those responsible for governance in local government. PPP 2014 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the scale and value of fraud detected by local government bodies in 2013/14; ■ longer term trends in fraud detection, including tenancy fraud; ■ trends and threats in other significant fraud types; and ■ national developments impacting on local government counter-fraud. <p>In addition, PPP 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ gives details of detected frauds and losses by region; ■ updates our checklist for those responsible for governance; and ■ highlights the second year of a programme of individual fraud briefings for councils. <p>The Audit Commission have issued fraud briefings to auditors in November 2014 for individual county councils, district councils, London boroughs, metropolitan district and unitary councils.</p>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments
<p>VFM profiles updated for the 2014/15 data sourced from DCLG</p> <p>Page 44</p>	<p>●</p> <p>For information</p>	<p>The Audit Commission VFM profiles planned budget section now contains the 2014/15 data sourced from the Department for Communities and Local Government – General Fund Revenue Account Budget (RA). The values are adjusted with gross domestic product (GDP) deflators from the HM Treasury's publication in June 2014.</p> <p>Other sections of the VFM profiles have also been updated with the latest data values for the following data sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mid-year population estimates ■ Planning applications ■ Fuel poverty ■ Climate change statistics ■ Active people survey ■ NHS delayed transfers of care ■ Finance and general statistics ■ Provision for children under five years of age in England ■ Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education ■ Collection rates for council tax and non-domestic rates ■ Housing benefit speed of processing ■ Housing benefit recoveries and fraud data ■ Housing benefit caseload statistics ■ Child and working tax credit statistics ■ Children in low-income families local measure ■ Special educational needs in England ■ Homelessness statistical release (P1E) ■ Fire statistics monitor ■ Fire and rescue authorities operational statistics bulletin ■ Fire and rescue service statistics <p>The VFM profiles can be seen on the Audit Commission website: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/information-and-analysis/</p>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments
NAO published a report examining the progress to date on the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF)	 For information	<p>The National Audit Office (NAO) has recently published a report examining the progress to date on the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF). Whilst the programme is recognised as being an innovative idea, the NAO highlights issues with the quality of early preparation and planning. It also finds that initial plans, submitted by all 151 local health and wellbeing boards in April 2014, did not generate the level of savings the Government anticipated and all plans had to be resubmitted.</p> <p>Planning for the Fund paused between April and July 2014 while the Government reviewed and revised the Fund's scope and how the £1 billion pay-for- performance part of the Fund would work. Independent assurance of the revised Fund plans found them to be stronger and better supported. Almost two-thirds of plans were either approved by Ministers or approved with support and only 5 plans were not approved. The biggest risk area identified is to the protection of social care services with 21 local areas assessed as having significant risks.</p> <p>The report can be found on the NAO website: http://www.nao.org.uk/report/planning-better-care-fund-2/</p>

Area	Level of Impact	Comments
<p>NAO have published two complimentary reports examining local authority finances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial sustainability of local authorities 2014 and; • The impact of funding reductions in local authorities 	<p>●</p> <p>For information</p>	<p>The National Audit Office (NAO) has recently published two complimentary reports examining local authority finances: Financial sustainability of local authorities 2014 and The impact of funding reduction of local authorities. The reports include findings based on surveys of Commission appointed auditors carried out since 2001 by the Commission. The NAO were provided with anonymised analysis of the survey findings by the Commission in order to support this work.</p> <p>The NAO finds that local authorities have coped well with reductions in government funding, but some groups of authorities are showing clear signs of financial stress. Over a quarter of single tier and county councils (those authorities responsible for social care and education) had to make unplanned reductions in service spend to deliver their 2013/14 budgets. Auditors are increasingly concerned about local authorities' capacity to make further savings, with 52 per cent of single tier and county councils not being well-placed to deliver their medium-term financial plans.</p> <p>The NAO also found that there is significant variation in the way that authorities have responded to the funding reductions. Authorities that have had larger cuts in government funding have not been able to protect funding of adults' and children's social care to the same extent as those with lower cuts. The report also shows that certain sub-services have experienced very substantial cuts in spending. Spending on the Supporting People programme, housing support and advice for vulnerable people fell by 45 per cent. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14, budgeted real terms spending on services for young people fell by 34 per cent.</p> <p>The reports can be found on the NAO website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Financial sustainability of local authorities 2014: http://www.nao.org.uk/report/financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-2014/ ■ The impact of funding reductions on local authorities: http://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-impact-funding-reductions-local-authorities/

Area	Level of Impact	Comments
Audit Commission publish: an update on Council tax and business rates collection.	<p>●</p> <p>For information</p>	<p>The Audit Commission has published an update to the Council tax and business rates collection VFM briefing, the last in its series of VFM data briefings analysing data in the VFM Profiles. The briefing looks at the amount of council tax and business rates councils collected and their collection rates in 2013/14 – the first year of new localised council tax support schemes and business rate retention arrangements.</p> <p>By the end of 2013/14 councils had collected £46.05 billion of the £47.26 billion due to be paid that year, leaving £1.21 billion uncollected. Council tax collection rates were 0.4 per cent lower than in 2012/13 but business rates collection rates were 0.2 per cent higher. Council tax debt from 2013/14 and previous years increased by 6 per cent. The proportion of debt from previous years that councils collected ranged from 2 per cent to 76 per cent and the proportion of debt written off ranged from 1 per cent to 32 per cent.</p> <p>Nearly four fifths of councils collected more business rates in 2013/14 than they did in 2012/13 in real terms and so were likely to benefit from the new business rates retention arrangements.</p> <p>The update can be found on the Audit Commission website: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/information-and-analysis/value-for-money-briefings-2/</p>



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Appendix

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Appendix 1 – 2014/15 Audit deliverables

Deliverable	Purpose	Timing	Status
Planning			
Fee letter	Communicate indicative fee for the audit year	April 2014	Complete
External audit plan	Outline our audit strategy and planned approach Identify areas of audit focus and planned procedures	March 2015	Complete
Interim			
Interim report	Details and resolution of control and process issues. Identify improvements required prior to the issue of the draft financial statements and the year-end audit. Initial VFM assessment on the Council's arrangements for securing value for money in the use of its resources.	June 2015	TBC
Substantive procedures			
Report to those charged with governance (ISA+260 report)	Details the resolution of key audit issues. Communication of adjusted and unadjusted audit differences. Performance improvement recommendations identified during our audit. Commentary on the Council's value for money arrangements.	September 2015	TBC
Completion			
Auditor's report	Providing an opinion on your accounts (including the Annual Governance Statement). Concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the VFM conclusion).	September 2015	TBC
WGA	Concluding on the Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office.	September 2015	TBC
Annual audit letter	Summarise the outcomes and the key issues arising from our audit work for the year.	November 2015	TBC
Certification of claims and returns			
Certification of claims and returns report	Summarise the outcomes of certification work on your claims and returns for Government departments.	December 2015	TBC



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