

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
18 June 2014

From: Director of Support Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Subject: DRAFT PLANNING REPORT FOR THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2014

All Wards

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members the Draft Audit Plan proposed by the Council's external auditors, Deloitte. This Plan sets out the scope of the work that is to be undertaken together with an assessment of audit risks. The detailed Plan is contained in Annex 'A'

2.0 RISK ANALYSIS:

2.1 There are no risks associated with considering this report.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION:

3.1 It is recommended that Members review and note the draft Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March 2014.

JUSTIN IVES

Background papers: None

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Draft Planning Report to the Audit,
Governance and Standards
Committee for year ending 31 March 2014

Contents

1. The big picture	2
2. Our audit quality promise	5
3. Changes in your Statement of Accounts	9
4. Scope of work and approach	12
5. Significant audit risks	15
6. Value for money conclusion	20
7. Grants and returns	22
8. Responsibility statement	24
Appendix 1: Independence and fees	27
Appendix 2: Fraud: responsibilities and representations	29
Appendix 3: Your audit team	31
Appendix 4: Timetable	32
Appendix 5: State of local public services	33
Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters	35

I am delighted to present this planning report for the 2013/14 audit of Hambleton District Council. This report sets out our audit approach and the more significant areas where we will focus our attention this year.

Paul Thomson, Audit Partner



The big picture

The big picture

We have set out below an overview of the key developments at the Council and the more significant matters we have considered in developing this Audit Plan. We consider these matters as part of our audit risk assessment and this determines where we will focus our work. Details of the impact of these matters on our approach are set out in this Audit Plan.

Relevant developments

- At month nine the Council is forecasting a revenue budget surplus of £72k when compared against its financial strategy target.
- At the end of December, forecast capital expenditure is set to be below the budgeted amount with a variance of £136k. £71k of this relates to the CCTV control room scheme being transferred into 2014/15 by which time the cost proposals will be finalised.
- The Audit Commission has determined a reduction in the grants to be certified in the current year. External certification is no longer required for the NNDR return.

Key developments in financial reporting requirements

- Changes to the Code requirements include the classification, recognition, measurement and disclosure of post-employment benefits.
- New guidance on the accounting entries required from the localisation of business rates, affecting the collection fund, with additional responsibilities falling on the Council in respect of the risks of appeals and the rewards of business rate growth.
- Clarification regarding the frequency of revaluations for properties. This amends previous guidance to permit valuations to be carried out on a rolling basis only if revaluation of the class of assets is completed within a short period and provided that revaluations are kept up to date.
- Other smaller changes to presentation and disclosure matters in the financial statements.
- The national Council Tax Benefit scheme has been replaced by a local Council Tax Reduction scheme, which the Council implemented from the start of the year.

Significant audit risks

- Recognition of grant income
- Valuation of PPE
- Completeness of provisioning for NNDR appeals
- Management override of key controls, as presumed by auditing standards

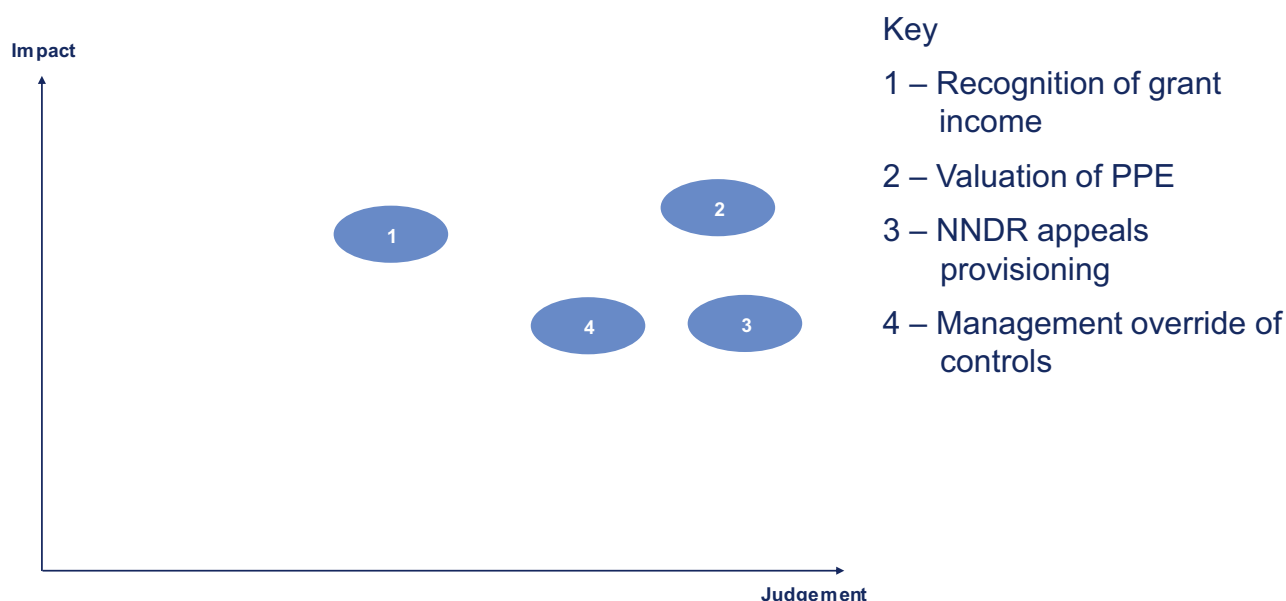
A reminder of our conclusions in 2012/13

Our audit opinion and audit adjustments

In September 2013, we issued the Council with an unmodified audit opinion on the financial statements. There were no audit adjustments made to the draft statement of accounts.

Identified significant risks for 2013/14

Key areas of audit focus for 2013/14



Our significant risks for 2013/14 are presented in the graph above.

These risks are similar to those raised in our planning report for 2012/13, and have been identified on the basis of our understanding of the Council, its objectives and the environment in which it operates.

The risk relating to NNDR appeals has been added for 2013/14, reflecting the new responsibility the Council has in this area, following the localisation of business rates.

Further details on each of the identified significant risks are presented later in this report.

Value for Money conclusion

We have not identified any significant risks in respect of our Value for Money conclusion.

We have considered the criteria specified by the Audit Commission as well as other factors directly affecting the Council, and concluded there are no significant risks to report on.

We will perform additional procedures as part of our review in support of our VfM conclusion

Our audit quality promise

Our audit quality promise

Our new quality standard



The quality of our audit delivery is of great importance to us. In order to ensure we deliver an excellent service to you, we have developed our audit quality promise. Key aspects of this delivery are:

- how we communicate with you throughout the year;
- what insight we bring around the quality of your control environment, systems and audit risk areas; and
- how we ensure that our team is delivering the best quality audit at every level.

This section sets out our commitments to management, officers and members in these areas and we will actively seek feedback on how we have performed against them.

From discussions with you and our experience with other Councils, we know that you value an integrated audit approach which encompasses the main financial statements audit, value for money conclusion and certification of relevant grants and returns. Our Audit Quality promise takes this into account. The key individuals that form part of our audit team for 2013/14 are consistent with the team in previous years. We have supplemented them as necessary with skilled, experienced and knowledgeable individuals to ensure timely and effective delivery of our audit. We pledge to take the same approach in future years with a consistent audit team, drawing on expertise as necessary to supplement our core team.

Our commitment to you

Communication



We believe that regular face to face communication is essential to delivering quality and insight through our audit. We have set out below our planned communications schedule for both the audit period and throughout the year.

Year round communication

We will be in regular contact with Louise Branford-White to ensure we remain up to date with the developing issues at the Council through the year, and will discuss, in advance, any papers we wish to present to a meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

Senior members of the audit team will attend meetings of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee as scheduled.

In these meetings we will discuss the latest Council developments, and in-year performance. We will also provide any updates on our findings to date, and any relevant regulatory / technical updates.

We will also make ourselves available through the year for ongoing discussions as necessary.

During the main audit period

During the audit period we will work closely with Justin Ives and Louise Branford-White. We will ensure we summarise our findings and discuss any emerging issues on the financial statement audit.

We will work with Justin Ives as our key point of contact for the Value for Money conclusion.

We will hold a close meeting with management to discuss the contents of our report to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

Will we maintain regular contact with Susan Grant during our testing of the Housing Benefit subsidy claim.

Open feedback process

We will carry out debrief meetings with the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Chair, the section 151 officer, Justin Ives, and Louise Branford-White to discuss how we have delivered against the commitments on both sides, as set out in this document, and any other aspects of our delivery.

We will respond to this feedback with agreed actions and timescales.

We will also seek direct feedback through regular meetings during the year.

Responding to queries and requests

We will always endeavour to respond to queries and requests as soon as possible give definitive timescales for delivery or their resolution.

We will proactively set up meetings to discuss any technical accounting or regulatory developments, which could have a significant impact on the Council, as soon as we become aware.

We will make ourselves available to discuss issues as they arise, in advance of the year end to smooth the closedown and accounts production processes.

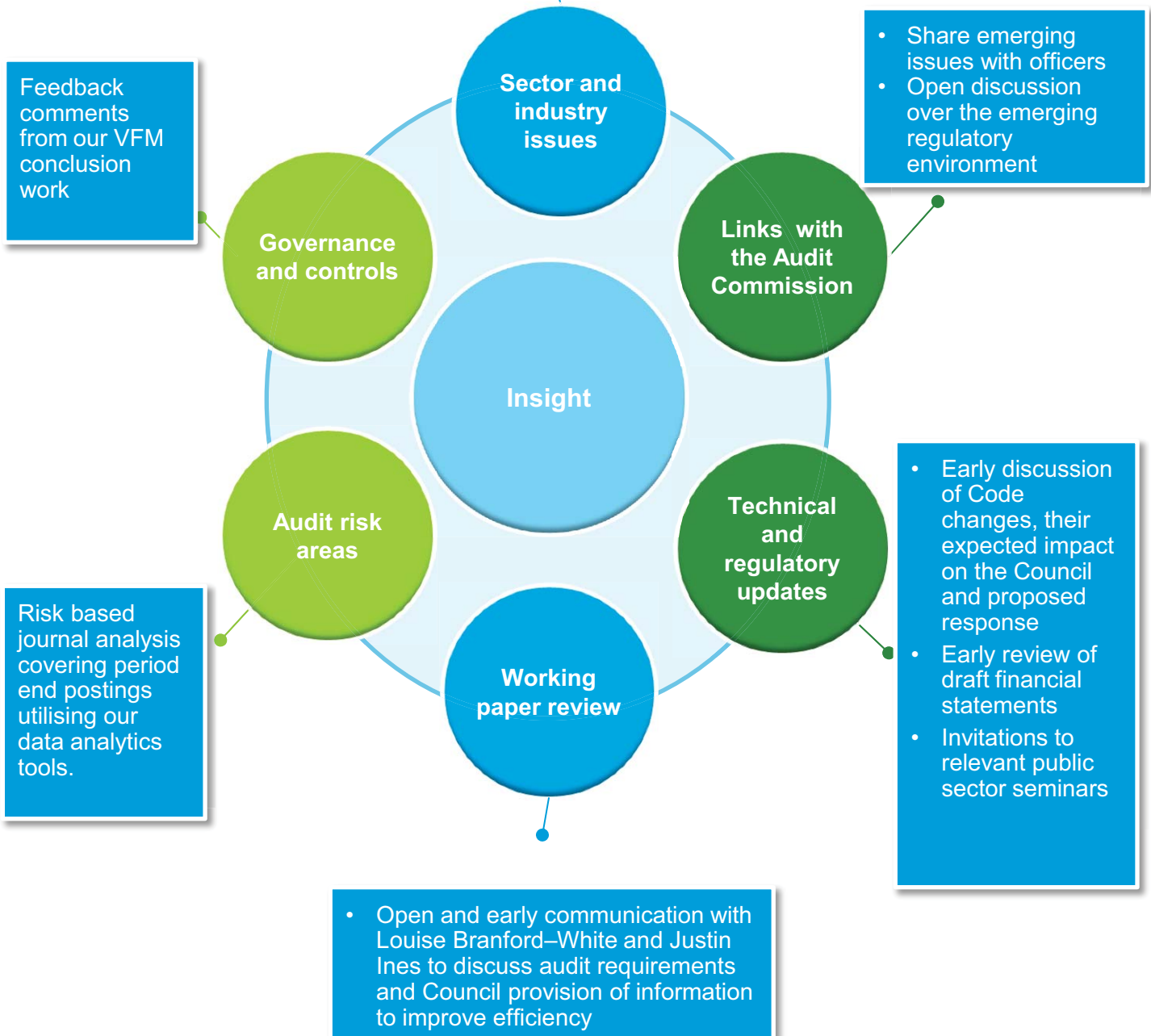
Bringing you insight



We have summarised below some of the ways we will provide the Council with insight during 2014

Sharing knowledge of sector developments, for example:

- We have attached at Appendix 5 a summary of our research into the state of local public services
- We will discuss the future impact and arrangements around the North Yorkshire NNDR pooling arrangements with key officers during the year
- We will discuss relevant Deloitte publications with senior staff to raise awareness of sector issues



Changes in your Statement of Accounts



Changes in your Statement of Accounts

New reporting requirements

We welcome this opportunity to set out for the Overview and Audit, Governance and Standards Committee a summary of the latest developments in financial reporting which will impact this year end.

Change in Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting requirements	Impact on Hambleton District Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-employment benefits: changes have been made to Code requirements in respect of the classification, recognition, measurement and disclosure requirements introduced as a result of amendments to the relevant accounting standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is relevant to the Council and will require a number of changes to the calculation and presentation of entries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting for business rates retention: the Code provides guidance on the accounting requirements arising from the localisation of business rates in England from 1 April 2013. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is relevant to the Council and will require a change in the form of accounting for the 2013/14 Statement of Accounts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Financial Statements: the Code makes amendments to the format of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is in respect of items that are potentially re-classifiable to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services at a future time. Where authorities have these types of transactions, the items listed in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure must be grouped into those items that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) will not be reclassified subsequently to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services; and b) will be reclassified subsequently to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services when specific conditions are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where local authorities do not have such transactions, no change is needed to the format of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. However CIPFA recommends in such circumstances that authorities clarify in their summary of significant accounting policies that, where this is the case, they do not have such transactions and have therefore not grouped the items in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure into amounts that may be re-classifiable and amounts that are not.



Changes in your Statement of Accounts (continued)

New reporting requirements

Change in Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting requirements	Impact on Hambleton District Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revaluation of properties - Clarification regarding the frequency of revaluations for Property, Plant and Equipment which amends previous guidance to permit valuations to be carried out on a rolling basis only if revaluation of the class of assets is completed within a short period and provided that revaluations are kept up to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is relevant to the Council, and management should consider the current frequency with which they revalue their assets.

Scope of work and approach

This section sets out our planned scoping for the audit of the Council's financial statements. We discuss our determined materiality and confirm the level of unadjusted misstatements which we will report to you. We confirm the extent to which reliance will be placed on internal controls and how this decision has been reached.

Scope of work and approach

We have five key areas of responsibility under the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice

Financial statements

We will conduct our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) ("ISA (UK and Ireland)") as adopted by the UK Auditing Practices Board ("APB") and the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice. The Council will prepare its accounts under the Code of Local Authority Accounting. There are no significant changes in respect of the scope of our work in relation to this area of responsibility.

Assurance report on the Whole of Government Accounts return

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) are commercial-style accounts covering the whole of the public sector and include some 1,700 separate bodies. We expect to perform limited procedures on the Council's consolidation pack, to confirm further procedures are not necessary. This is in line with the requirements of previous years.

Value for Money conclusion

We are required to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Our conclusion is given in respect of two criteria:

- Whether the organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience
- Whether the organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this responsibility, we take into account our work on the Annual Governance Statement and the work of regulators.

Grants

Under Section 28 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Commission is responsible for making arrangements for certifying claims and returns in respect of grants or subsidies made or paid by any Minister of the Crown or a Public Authority to a Local Authority.

The appointed auditor carries out work on individual claims and returns as an agent of the Commission under certification arrangements made by the Commission which comprise certification instructions which the auditor must follow.

We produce an annual report on completion of our work, summarising our work in respect of grants which will be discussed at the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

Annual Governance Statement

We are required to consider the completeness of the disclosures in the Annual Governance Statement in meeting the relevant requirements and identify any inconsistencies between the disclosures and the information that we are aware of from our work on the financial statements and other work.

We will also review reports from regulatory bodies and any related action plans developed by the Council.

The most significant of the grants we certify relates to the Council's claim from the Department of Work and Pensions for Housing Benefit Subsidy. In previous years, this certification process included providing the Council with assurance over the processing of Council Tax Benefit claims as well. Following the replacement of Council Tax Benefit with a local Council Tax Reduction scheme, our certification does not cover these elements of Council income and expenditure. Members may wish to consider the level of assurance they gain over these balances.

Scope of work and approach (continued)

Independence

We confirm we are independent of the Council. We will reconfirm our independence and objectivity to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee or the year ending 31 March 2014 in our final report to the Committee. Appendix 1 sets out proposed fees for the year.

Approach to controls testing

As set out in "Briefing on audit matters" included as Appendix 6, our risk assessment procedures will include obtaining an understanding of controls considered to be 'relevant to the audit'. This involves evaluating the design of the controls and determining whether they have been implemented ("D & I").

We will consider the results of our procedures in respect of the Council's controls and the extent of any impact our findings have on our substantive audit procedures.

Obtain and refresh our understanding of the Council and its environment including the identification of relevant controls

Identify risks and any controls that address those risks

Carry out 'design and implementation' work on relevant controls

If considered necessary, test the operating effectiveness of selected controls

Design and perform a combination of substantive analytical procedures and tests of details that are most responsive to the assessed risks

Scoping of material account balances, classes of transactions and disclosures

We perform an assessment of risk which includes considering the size, composition and qualitative factors related to account balances, classes of transactions and disclosure. This enables us to determine the scope of further audit procedures to address the risk of material misstatement. We will report to you any significant findings from our scoping work.

Liaison with internal audit

We continue to rely on the work of the Internal Audit function to inform our risk assessment. The Auditing Standards Board has issued a revised version of ISA (UK and Ireland) 610 "Using the work of internal auditors". This prohibits use of internal audit to provide direct assistance to the audit. Our current approach to the use of the work of Internal Audit has been designed to be compatible with the new requirements, and will not change the existing scope of Internal or External Audit's work. However, this will prevent us from further increasing the extent of our use of Internal Audit's work in future.

We plan to hold discussions with the Head of Internal Audit to understand the work they have performed in the year and any weaknesses they have identified in the control environment, so we can assess their impact and plan our audit response.

Whole of Government Accounts

Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission have a statutory duty under the Code of Audit Practice to review and report on the Council's whole of government accounts return. We will consider the requirement to review the WGA return and undertake appropriate procedures accordingly.



Significant audit risks

This section sets out our comments regarding the significant audit risks identified. We explain the nature of the risk itself, how these risks will be addressed by our audit work and any related presentational and/or disclosure matters within the financial statements.

Risk assessment is at the heart of our integrated audit approach as it is only with proper identification of the most significant audit risks, that we are able to provide the highest quality assurance in the most efficient and effective manner.

We perform an assessment of risk which includes considering the size, composition and qualitative factors relating to account balances, classes of transactions and disclosures. This enables us to determine the scope of further audit procedures to address the risk of material misstatement. We will report to you any significant findings from our scoping work.

In 2012/13 materiality was £540k based on income for the year. We will update this figure on receipt of the draft 2013/14 financial statements. We will report to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on all unadjusted misstatements greater than our clearly trivial threshold, which was £27k in 2012/13, and other adjustments that are qualitatively material.

1. Revenue recognition

We consider a significant risk exists in relation to the non-recognition of cash receipts or their recognition in the incorrect accounting period.

We have identified recognition of Grant Income as a significant risk due to:

- Grant income being recognised only once any conditions attached over grants have been met.
- Significant management judgement over determining if there are any conditions attached to a grant, and if conditions have been met.
- Complex accounting for grant income as the basis for revenue recognition in the accounts will depend on the scheme rules for each grant.

ISA240 requirements

International Standards of Auditing (UK and Ireland) 240 – *The auditor's responsibility to consider fraud in an audit of financial statements* requires us to presume that there is a risk of fraud with respect to the recognition of revenue.

Our approach

Our approach

- We will test the design and implementation of controls management has put in place to ensure income is recognised in the correct period.
- We will carry out detailed testing of grant income to check that recognition of income properly reflects the grant scheme rules, that entitlement is in agreement with the draft or final grant claim and that the grant control account balance has been properly reconciled.
- We will review correspondence attached to specific grants and compare to the Council's accounting treatment.

2. Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment

We consider a significant risk exists in relation to the valuation of PPE assets owing to the prevailing conditions in the property market at this time.

We have considered the nature of the Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) balance and concluded that a significant risk exists in relation to the valuation of Land and Buildings. This is because:

- The Council holds significant amounts of Land and Buildings (£17.2m net book value as at 31/3/13);
- Whilst the property market is recovering, there remain uncertainties around the valuation of a number of assets; and
- Effective valuations require the use of expert knowledge to maintain materially accurate valuations, and the assessment of market values are inherently judgemental.

Impact on the Council

The value of Land and Buildings is held on the Council's Balance Sheet, with revaluation gains recognised in the Revaluation Reserve, and losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve, such that there is a balance for that asset, and then in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an impairment.

Changes in value do not affect the Council's "bottom line", as statutory overrides reverse impairments to the Capital Adjustment Account, meaning the Council would not have to raise council tax to fund impairment losses.

However, where an impairment is caused by the reduced service potential of an asset (rather than a change in value), the Council could face charges to repair the building and restore the asset so it is fit for use.

Our approach

- We will test the design and implementation of controls management has put in place to ensure Land and Buildings are materially fairly stated in the Balance Sheet.
- We will review any valuation exercises management has engages specialists to undertake in year, consulting with our specialist valuation colleagues where we consider it necessary.
- We will also test the disclosure of PPE balances in the accounts, particularly with reference to the disclosures of valuation methodologies and the dates of valuations.

3. Completeness of NNDR appeal provisions

The localisation of business rates places new responsibilities on the Council

We have identified the completeness of any provision for NNDR appeals as a significant risk. This is because:

- The localisation of business rates passes the risks and rewards associated with National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) on the Council for the first time;
- Previously the Council was responsible for collecting the rates due, paying these to central government and receiving grant income to fund services;
- From 1 April 2013, the Council now faces the risk relating to declining business rate income, the cost of appeals as well as the benefits from any business rate growth; and
- This represents a significant unusual transaction, and the accounting entries arising from NNDR appeals have significant management judgement in determining their appropriateness.

Impact on the Council

From our initial inquiries, we understand a number of significant business ratepayers have appealed against the ratings provided by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

We understand the Council is entering a risk pooling arrangement for NNDR with a number of North Yorkshire councils from the 1 April 2014. Whilst this is not directly relevant to our audit this year, we will consider the impact this has on the accounting disclosures, and discuss with management the its oversight of the new arrangements.

Our approach

- We will review the controls management has in place for assessing the required accounting entries and determining any estimated provision, if necessary, and conclude whether these have been designed and implemented effectively.
- We will review a detailed sample of appeals made and consider the appropriateness of the accounting decisions made by the Council.
- We will review the disclosures made by the Council in terms of the adequacy, sufficiency and clarity to ensure the accounts present a true and fair record in this regard.

4. Management override of controls

In accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA 240), we presume that there is a risk of fraud as a result of Management override of controls.

Our approach

- We will consider those significant accounting estimates, which may be subject to Management bias, as set out in the other risks described in this section.
- We will also perform focussed work on the testing of journals, using data analytics to profile the journal population and focus our testing on higher risk journals; significant accounting estimates, and any unusual transactions, including those with related parties.
- We will use enhanced data analytics to provide support through our new data analytics toolbar.

Value for money conclusion

Value for money conclusion

Our work will focus on the extent to which the Council has proper arrangements in place to secure value for money

Scope

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2010 we are required to include in our audit report a conclusion on whether Hambleton District Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources - this conclusion is known as “the VFM conclusion”.

Specified criteria for auditors’ VFM conclusion	Focus of the criteria for 2014
The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience.	The organisation has robust systems and processes to manage financial risks and opportunities effectively, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.
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 achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity.

Approach to our work

We draw sources of assurance relating to our VFM responsibilities from:

- the audited body’s system of internal control as reported on in its Annual Governance Statement;
- the results of the work of the Commission, other inspectorates and review agencies to the extent that the results come to our attention and have an impact on our responsibilities;
- any work mandated by the Commission – of which there was none in 2014; and
- any other locally determined risk-based VFM work that auditors consider necessary to discharge their responsibilities.

Preliminary assessment

Our preliminary assessment is that there are no significant risks in relation to our VFM responsibilities which requires local work to be carried out and we have therefore not identified any significant risks in our audit plan. This preliminary view is based on the undertaking of a risk assessment, which involves consideration of common risk factors for local authorities identified by the Audit Commission, concluding on whether they represent actual risks for the purpose of our VFM conclusion on Hambleton District Council

We have undertaken this preliminary work through review of relevant documentation, including cabinet and committee papers, and discussion with officers as necessary. We will update our detailed risk assessment from April to take account of the outturn financial and performance information for 2013/14, and through our consideration of what has been reported in the Annual Governance Statement, matters reported by regulators and other matters which have come to our attention from our work carried out in relation to our other Code responsibilities.

Grants and returns

Grants

Our work will focus on the certification of the grants in scope as per our contract with the Audit Commission

Scope

Under Section 28 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Commission is responsible for making arrangements for certifying claims and returns in respect of grants or subsidies made or paid by any Minister of the Crown or a Public Authority to a Local Authority. The Commission, rather than its appointed auditors, has the responsibility for making certification arrangements. The appointed auditor carries out work on individual claims and returns as an agent of the Commission under certification arrangements made by the Commission which comprise certification instructions which the auditor must follow.

The respective responsibilities of the grant paying body, authorities, the Audit Commission and appointed auditors in relation to claims and returns are set out in the 'General Certification Instructions' produced by the Audit Commission.

Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are required to:

- review the information contained in a claim or return and to express a conclusion whether the claim or return is: i) in accordance with the underlying records; or ii) is fairly stated and in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions;
- examine the claim or return and related accounts and records of the Local Authority in accordance with the specific grant certification instructions;
- direct our work to those matters that, in the appointed auditor's view, significantly affect the claim or return;
- plan and complete our work in a timely fashion so that deadlines are met; and
- complete the appointed auditor's certificate, qualified as necessary, in accordance with the general guidance in the grant certification instructions.

These responsibilities do not place on the appointed auditor a responsibility to either:

- identify every error in a claim or return;
- or maximise the authority's entitlement to income under it.

Non-certification of NNDR3 return for 2013/14

From 2013/14 the NNDR3 return is no longer subject to external certification. In previous years we have placed reliance on the certification of this claim which has reduced the quantum of testing required on non-domestic rates in the main audit. The absence of the NNDR3 certification will therefore have the effect of increasing the work required around non-domestic rates to support our main audit opinion. We understand the Audit Commission are considering whether a fee adjustment should be made for this.

Housing Benefit claim

A local Council Tax Reduction scheme has replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme from 1 April 2013. The funding receivable from the government in respect of this is not subject to external certification.

We continue to plan our approach to the Housing Benefit Subsidy certification and are in contact with officers to ensure appropriate progress is made to meet the deadlines required.

Responsibility statement

Purpose of our report and responsibility statement

Our report is designed to help you meet your governance duties

What we report

Our report is designed to establish our respective responsibilities in relation to the financial statement audit, to agree our audit plan and to take the opportunity to ask you questions at the planning stage of our audit. We enhance this reporting with observations arising from our audit work and our Insight Plan performed to date which are designed to help the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee discharge its governance duties. Our report includes:

- Our audit plan, including key audit judgements and the planned scope and timing of our audit
- Key regulatory and corporate governance updates, relevant to you

What we don't report

- As you will be aware, our audit is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the Committee.
- Also, there will be further information you need to discharge your governance responsibilities, such as matters reported on by Management or by other specialist advisers.
- Finally, the views on internal controls and business risk assessment in our final report should not be taken as comprehensive or as an opinion on effectiveness since they will be based solely on the audit procedures performed in the audit of the financial statements and the other procedures performed in fulfilling our audit plan.

Other relevant communications

- This report should be read alongside the supplementary "Briefing on audit matters" circulated to you with this report.
- We will update you if there are any significant changes to the audit plan.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our report with you and receive your feedback.

Deloitte LLP

Chartered Accountants

Leeds

27 May 2014

This report has been prepared for the Audit, Governance and Risk Committee, as a body, and we therefore accept responsibility to you alone for its contents. We accept no duty, responsibility or liability to any other parties, since this report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. Except where required by law or regulation, it should not be made available to any other parties without our prior written consent.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Independence and fees

We confirm we are independent of Hambleton District Council

As part of our obligations under International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) we are required to report to you on the matters listed below:

Independence confirmation	We confirm we are independent of Hambleton District Council and will reconfirm our independence and objectivity to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee for the year ending 31 March 2014 in our final report to the Committee.
Fees	Our audit fees are set by the Audit Commission in line with national scale fees. Details of the non-audit services fees proposed for the period have been presented separately on the following page.
Non-audit services	In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between APB Revised Ethical Standards for Auditors and the Council's policy for the supply of non-audit services or any apparent breach of that policy. We continue to review our independence and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place including, but not limited to, the rotation of senior partners and professional staff and the involvement of additional partners and professional staff to carry out reviews of the work performed and to otherwise advise as necessary.

Appendix 1: Independence and fees (continued)

We have set out below our audit fees for 2013/14

The table below details our proposed audit fees and non-audit fees for the year ending 31 March 2014 for those services for which we have been engaged or proposed for as at the date of this report.

	Current year £'000	Prior year £'000
Fees payable in respect of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in respect of Hambleton District Council's annual accounts, assurance report on the Whole of Government accounts and the value of money conclusion (note 1)	53	53
Fees payable for the certification of grant claims (note 2)	15	20
Total fees payable in respect of our role as Appointed Auditor	68	68
Non audit fees (note 3)	-	-

Note 1:

From 2013/14 the NNDR3 return is no longer subject to external certification. In previous years we have placed reliance on the certification of this claim which has reduced the quantum of testing required on non-domestic rates in the main audit. The absence of the NNDR3 certification will therefore have the effect of increasing the work required around domestic rates to support our main audit opinion. We understand the Audit Commission are considering whether a fee adjustment should be made for this.

Note 2:

The scale fee for 2013/14 is based on actual certification fees for 2011/12 adjusted to reflect the absence of NNDR3 certification and the exclusion of Council Tax Benefit from the Housing Benefit subsidy certification work. The Commission accept that grants work varies year on year and the work in 2011/12 may not be representative of the work required in 2013/14 and hence an adjustment may be required once the 2013/14 work is complete.

Note 3:

Deloitte have not undertaken any additional non-audit work at the Council in either 2013/14 or 2012/13. The certification of grant claims is an inherent part of the Audit Commission's audit regime, and we (and the Commission) do not consider these fees to be non-audit services.

Appendix 2: Fraud: responsibilities and representations

As auditors, we obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.

Characteristics

- Misstatements in the financial statements can arise from either fraud or error. The distinguishing factor between fraud and error is whether the underlying action that results in the misstatement of the financial statements is intentional or unintentional.
- Two types of intentional misstatements are relevant as auditors – misstatements resulting from fraudulent financial reporting and misstatements resulting from misappropriation of assets.

Responsibilities

Your responsibilities

- The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with Management and those charged with governance, including establishing and maintaining internal controls over the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Our responsibilities

- We are required to obtain representations from your Management regarding internal controls, assessment of risk and any known or suspected fraud or misstatement.
- As auditors, we obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.
- As set out in Section 5 above we have identified the risk of fraud in revenue recognition and management override of controls as a key audit risk for the Council.

Our responsibilities and those of the Council are explained in the Audit Commission's publication, 'The responsibilities of Auditors and of Audited Bodies – Local Government' issued March 2010.

Appendix 2: Fraud: responsibilities and representations (continued)

We make enquiries of Management, internal audit and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee regarding fraud.

We will make the following inquiries regarding fraud:

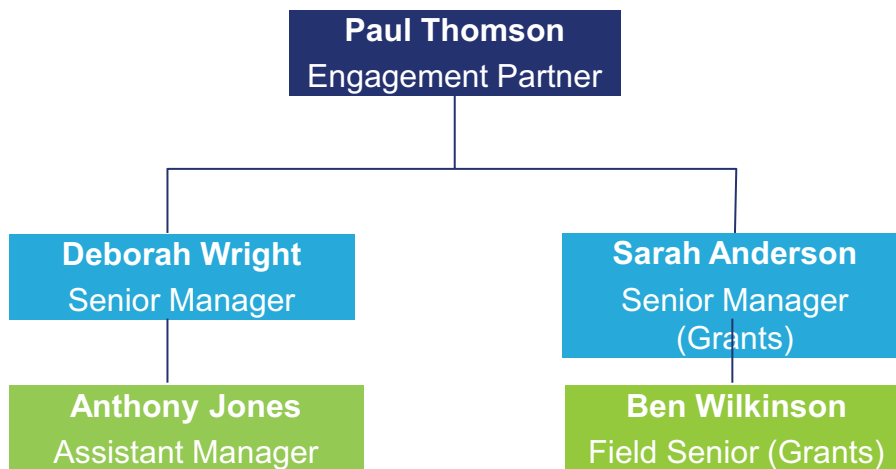
Management	Internal Audit	The Overview and Scrutiny committee
<p>Management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud including the nature, extent and frequency of such assessments. Management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity.</p> <p>Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity.</p> <p>Management's communication, if any, to employees regarding its views on business practices and ethical behaviour. Whether Management has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.</p>	<p>Whether internal audit has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity, to obtain their views about the risks of fraud, and to obtain status reports on fraud cases during 2013/14.</p>	<p>How the committee exercises oversight of Management's processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity and the internal control that Management has established to mitigate these risks.</p> <p>Whether the committee has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.</p>

We will request the following to be stated in the representation letter signed on behalf of the Committee:

- We acknowledge our responsibilities for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.
- We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- [We are not aware of any fraud or suspected fraud / We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and] that affects the entity or group and involves:
 - (i) Management;
 - (ii) employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - (iii) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

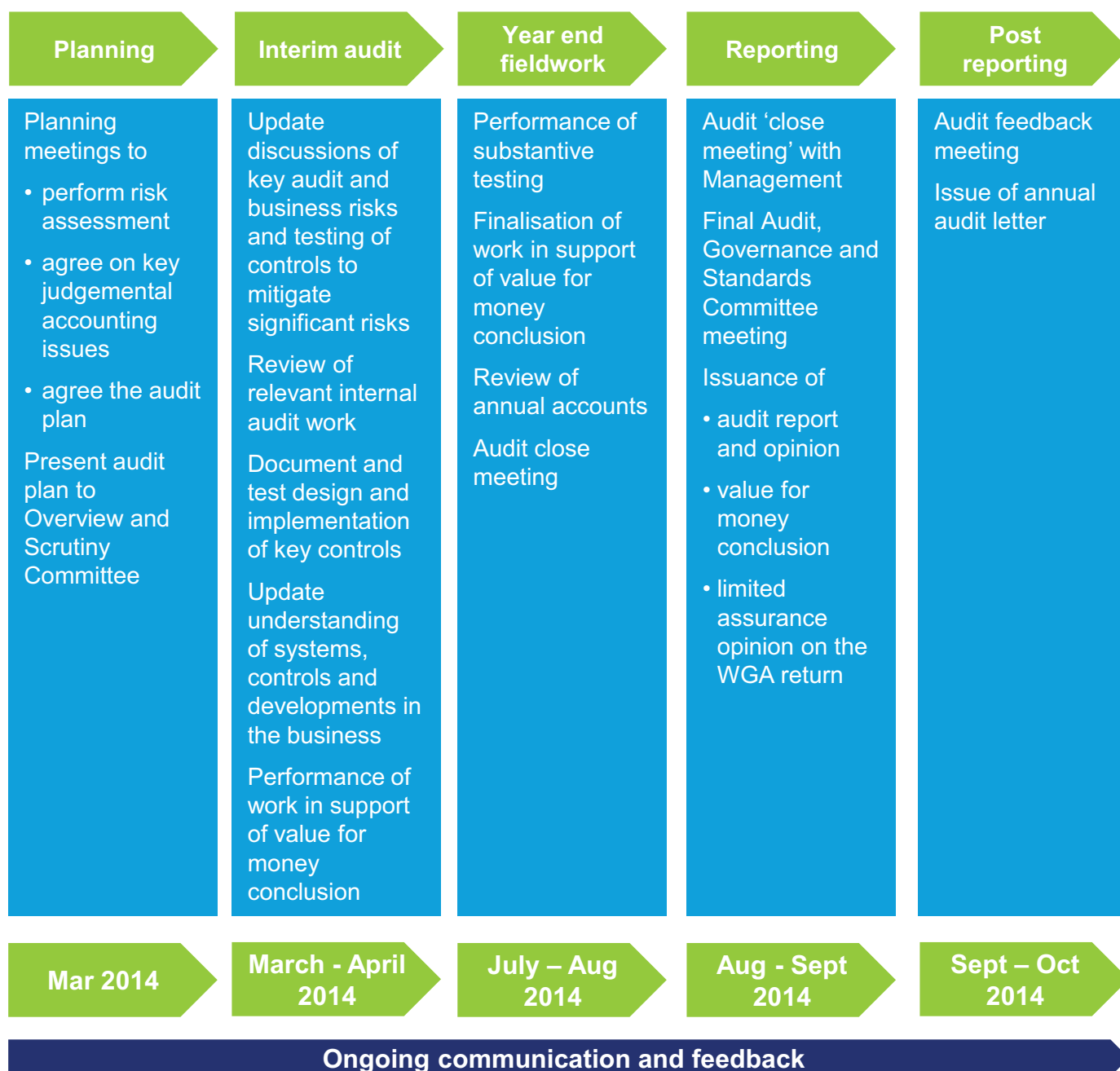
Appendix 3: Your audit team

A senior team, with continuity from last year, that incorporates specialists to perform audit work over grants and also provide insight and add value to the Council. Our team is selected from our group of public sector specialists.



Appendix 4: Timetable

Set out below is the approximate expected timing of our reporting and communication with Management and those charged with governance.





Appendix 5: State of local public services

We summarise the outcome of our research which provides further context for our audit

During the spring and summer of 2013, Deloitte conducted detailed research to answer a simple question: what is the state of the UK state? As part of the research, we commissioned IPSOS MORI to capture the attitudes of people that run local public services. The results provide a snapshot of local services during a period of profound change.

We have summarised the key messages in relation to local public services below.

Overall

Overall chief executives told us that they feel their organisations are coping well and responding effectively to the challenging circumstances.

They also said that while the depth and speed of change has been difficult for staff, morale is holding up, although future cuts create understandable concerns.

Link between local economies and local services has moved up the agenda

Combined with cuts, the recession has put the health of local economies high on the agenda. Weak economic growth and unemployment has increased pressure on the local public sector as demand for spending has increased. This concern was a clear theme, particularly at a time when cuts are reducing capacity to provide. One police respondent reported that while crime was down overall, shoplifting for food has increased.

Local public service executives fear the impact of welfare reforms

Our research suggests that public service leaders are particularly concerned about the fallout from welfare reform. Some wondered if central government has assessed whether savings on welfare spending will be counterbalanced by increased demand on local services. This was particularly a concern for directors in childrens services where interviewees described rises in child protection cases. Many expressed concerns that cuts will affect their ability to invest in preventative services.

The people in our local public services are focused on opportunities – not just challenges

Our research showed that local public service executives see the current climate as an opportunity to refocus their services on residents' needs and outcomes, as well as to use creativity rather than resources to solve problems. One police respondent told us that in the past, additional finance would have been used to deliver change – but now, the force explores service redesign. On balance, interviewees felt that the opportunities of the coming five years outweigh the challenges.



Appendix 5: State of local public services (continued)

The game has changed – so have leadership priorities

When interview responses were collated, a striking trend emerged: organisational leaders are focused on their people and how they can be empowered to rise to their organisation's challenges. Public value is a notably important issue; a number of executives mentioned values – such as caring, fair and trusted – as being central to the public service ethos. At a time of public sector headcount reductions, interviewees spoke of the importance of attracting staff with the right skills.

A new public services landscape has brought a new set of risks

A number of interviewees told us about the advantages of public sector partnerships in delivering joined-up services, transferring knowledge and generating savings. Most thought that partnerships with the private and third sectors were also beneficial. They thought that cross-sector working brought specific benefits, including exposure to new ideas and new delivery models, efficiency and quality from private sector and local knowledge and niche services from the third sector. But many also recognised that commissioning and partnerships outside the public sector brought new, critical risks that needed to be managed.

Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters

Published for Those Charged With Governance



This document is intended to assist those charged with governance to understand the major aspects of our audit approach, including explaining the key concepts behind the Deloitte Audit methodology including audit objectives and materiality.

Further, it describes the safeguards developed by Deloitte to counter threats to our independence and objectivity.

This document will only be reissued if significant changes to any of those matters highlighted above occur.

We will usually communicate our audit planning information and the findings from the audit separately. Where we issue separate reports these should be read in conjunction with this "Briefing on audit matters".

Approach and scope of the audit

Primary audit objectives	<p>We conduct our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) as adopted by the UK Financial Reporting Council ("FRC") and the Code of Audit Practice as established by the Audit Commission. Our statutory audit objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to express an opinion in true and fair view terms to the members on the financial statements;• to express an opinion as to whether the accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting;• To express an opinion as to whether the entity has put in place appropriate systems and processes to secure value for money in its use of resources; and• to express an opinion as to whether the Annual Governance Statement, is consistent with the financial statements and our knowledge of the Council.
Other reporting objectives	<p>Our reporting objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• present significant reporting findings to those charged with governance. This will highlight key judgements, important accounting policies and estimates and the application of new reporting requirements, as well as significant control observations; and• provide timely and constructive letters of recommendation to management. This will include key business process improvements and significant controls weaknesses identified during our audit.

Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters (continued)

Materiality

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to appropriate accounting principles and statutory requirements.

"Materiality" is defined in the International Accounting Standards Board's "Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements" in the following terms:

"Information is material if its omission or misstatement could influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements. Materiality depends on the size of the item or error judged in the particular circumstances of its omission or misstatement. Thus, materiality provides a threshold or cut-off point rather than being a primary qualitative characteristic which information must have if it is to be useful."

We determine materiality based on professional judgment in the context of our knowledge of the audited entity, including consideration of factors such as shareholder expectations, industry developments, financial stability and reporting requirements for the financial statements.

We determine materiality to:

- determine the nature, timing and extent of audit procedures; and
- evaluate the effect of misstatements.

The extent of our procedures is not based on materiality alone but also the quality of systems and controls in preventing material misstatement in the financial statements, and the level at which known and likely misstatements are tolerated by you in the preparation of the financial statements.

Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters (continued)

Uncorrected misstatements

In accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) (“ISAs (UK and Ireland)”) we will communicate to you all uncorrected misstatements (including disclosure deficiencies) identified during our audit, other than those which we believe are clearly trivial.

ISAs (UK and Ireland) do not place numeric limits on the meaning of ‘clearly trivial’. The Audit Engagement Partner, management and those charged with governance will agree an appropriate limit for 'clearly trivial'. In our report we will report all individual identified uncorrected misstatements in excess of this limit and other identified errors in aggregate.

We will consider identified misstatements in qualitative as well as quantitative terms.

Audit methodology

Our audit methodology takes into account the changing requirements of auditing standards and adopts a risk based approach. We utilise technology in an efficient way to provide maximum value to members and create value for management and the Board whilst minimising a “box ticking” approach.

Our audit methodology is designed to give directors and members the confidence that they deserve.

For controls considered to be ‘relevant to the audit’ we evaluate the design of the controls and determine whether they have been implemented (“D & I”). The controls that are determined to be relevant to the audit will include those:

- where we plan to obtain assurance through the testing of operating effectiveness;
- relating to identified risks (including the risk of fraud in revenue recognition, unless rebutted and the risk of management override of controls);
- where we consider we are unable to obtain sufficient audit assurance through substantive procedures alone; and
- to enable us to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements and design and perform further audit procedures

Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters (continued)

Other requirements of International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland)

ISAs (UK and Ireland) require we communicate the following additional matters:

ISA (UK & Ireland)	Matter
ISQC 1	Quality control for firms that perform audits and review of financial statements, and other assurance and related services engagements
240	The auditor's responsibilities to consider fraud in an audit of financial statements
250	Consideration of laws and regulations in an audit of financial statements
265	Communicating deficiencies in internal control to those charged with governance and management
450	Evaluation of misstatements identified during the audit
505	External confirmations
510	Initial audit engagements – opening balances
550	Related parties
560	Subsequent events
570	Going concern
600	Special considerations – audits of group financial statements (including the work of component auditors)
705	Modifications to the opinion in the independent auditor's report
706	Emphasis of matter paragraphs and other matter paragraphs in the independent auditor's report
710	Comparative information – corresponding figures and comparative financial statements
720	Section A: The auditor's responsibilities related to other information in documents containing audited financial statements

Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters (continued)

Independence policies and procedures

Important safeguards and procedures have been developed by Deloitte to counter threats or perceived threats to our objectivity, which include the items set out below.

Safeguards and procedures

- Every opinion (not just statutory audit opinions) issued by Deloitte is subject to technical review by a member of our independent Professional Standards Review unit.
- Where appropriate, review and challenge takes place of key decisions by the Second Partner and by the Independent Review Partner, which goes beyond ISAs (UK and Ireland), and ensures the objectivity of our judgement is maintained.
- We report annually to those charged with governance our assessment of objectivity and independence. This report includes a summary of non-audit services provided together with fees receivable.
- There is formal consideration and review of the appropriateness of continuing the audit engagement before accepting reappointment.
- Periodic rotation takes place of the audit engagement partner, the independent review partner and key partners involved in the audit in accordance with our policies and professional and regulatory requirements.
- In accordance with the Ethical Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board (“APB”), there is an assessment of the level of threat to objectivity and potential safeguards to combat these threats prior to acceptance of any non-audit engagement. This would include particular focus on threats arising from self-interest, self-review, management, advocacy, over-familiarity and intimidation.

In the UK, statutory oversight and regulation of auditors is carried out by the FRC. The Firm’s policies and procedures are subject to external monitoring by both the Audit Quality Review Team (AQRT, formerly known as the Audit Inspection Unit), which is part of the FRC’s Conduct Division, and the ICAEW’s Quality Assurance Department (QAD). The AQRT is charged with monitoring the quality of audits of economically significant entities and the QAD with monitoring statutory compliance of audits for all other entities. Both report to the ICAEW’s Audit Registration Committee.

Appendix 6: Briefing on Audit matters (continued)

Independence policies

Our detailed ethical policies' standards and independence policies are issued to all partners and employees who are required to confirm their compliance annually. We are also required to comply with the policies of other relevant professional and regulatory bodies.

Amongst other things, these policies:

- state that no Deloitte partner (or any closely-related person) is allowed to hold a financial interest in any of our UK audited entities;
- require that professional staff may not work on assignments if they (or any closely-related person) have a financial interest in the audited entity or a party to the transaction or if they have a beneficial interest in a trust holding a financial position in the audited entity;
- state that no person in a position to influence the conduct and outcome of the audit (or any closely related persons) should enter into business relationships with UK audited entities or their affiliates;
- prohibit any professional employee from obtaining gifts from audited entities unless the value is clearly insignificant; and
- provide safeguards against potential conflicts of interest.

Remuneration and evaluation policies

Partners are evaluated on roles and responsibilities they take within the firm including their technical ability and their ability to manage risk.

APB Ethical Standards

The APB issued five ethical standards for auditors that apply a 'threats' and 'safeguards' approach.

The five standards cover:

- maintaining integrity, objectivity and independence;
- financial, business, employment and personal relationships between auditors and their audited entities;
- long association of audit partners and other audit team members with audit engagements;
- audit fees, remuneration and evaluation of the audit team, litigation between auditors and their audited entities, and gifts and hospitality received from audited entities; and
- non-audit services provided to audited entities.

Our policies and procedures comply with these standards.

Deloitte.

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