

# External Audit Plan

*Year ending 31 March 2018*

---

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority  
April 2018



# Contents



**Your key Grant Thornton  
team members are:**

**Phil Jones**  
Director

T: 0121 232 5232  
E: phil.w.jones@uk.gt.com

**Neil Preece**  
Manager

T: 0121 232 5292  
E:neil.a.preece@uk.gt.com

**Allison Thomas**  
Audit Executive

T:0121 232 5278  
E : Allison.A.Thomas@uk.gt.com

Section	Page
1. Introduction & headlines	3
2. Deep business understanding	4
3. Significant risks identified	5
4. Reasonably possible risks identified	7
5. Other matters	9
6. Materiality	10
7. Results of Interim Audit Work	11
8. Value for Money arrangements	13
9. Audit logistics, team & audit fees	14
10. Early close	15
11. Independence & non-audit services	16

The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit planning process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect the Authority or any weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales: No.OC307742. Registered office: 30 Finsbury Square, London, EC2A 1AG. A list of members is available from our registered office. Grant Thornton UK LLP is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions.

# Introduction & headlines

## Purpose

This document provides an overview of the planned scope and timing of the statutory audit of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority ('the Authority') for those charged with governance.

## Respective responsibilities

The National Audit Office ('the NAO') has issued a document entitled Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'). This summarises where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from the audited body. Our respective responsibilities are also set in the Terms of Appointment and Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), the body responsible for appointing us as auditor of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority. We draw your attention to both of these documents on the [PSAA website](#).

## Scope of our audit

The scope of our audit is set in accordance with the Code and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK). We are responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on the:

- financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement) that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance (the Audit & Standards Committee); and
- Value for Money arrangements in place at the Authority for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or the Audit & Standards Committee of your responsibilities. It is the responsibility of the Authority to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Authority is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our audit approach is based on a thorough understanding of the Authority's business and is risk based.

## Significant risks

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

- Under ISA (UK&I) 240 it is presumed that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.
- The Authority's pension fund asset and liability as reflected in its balance sheet represent significant estimates in the financial statements.

We will communicate significant findings on these areas as well as any other significant matters arising from the audit to you in our Audit Findings (ISA 260) Report.

## Materiality

We have determined planning materiality to be £0.629m (PY £0.717m), which equates to 2% of your forecast gross expenditure for the year. We are obliged to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance. Clearly trivial has been set at £31k (PY £36k). We have set a separate lower materiality level for the disclosure note on senior manager's remuneration. In view of the sensitivity of this note to the reader of the accounts, we have set a materiality level of £100k.

## Value for Money arrangements

Our risk assessment regarding your arrangements to secure value for money have identified the following VFM significant risks:

- The gap in the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan

## Audit logistics

Our interim visit will take place in January and March and our final visit will take place in June and July. Our key deliverables are this Audit Plan and our Audit Findings Report.

Our fee for the audit will be no less than £32,872 (PY: £32,872) for the Authority.

## Independence

We have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and we as a firm, and each covered person, confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

# Deep business understanding

## Changes to service delivery

### Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)

In October the PCC submitted a full business case to take over the governance of the Authority. The Home Secretary appointed an Independent Assessor to consider the impact on public safety and the realism of the forecast savings. In March the PCC proposals were approved. Any change to the governance arrangements is likely to happen after May 2018. This will affect who we report our Audit Findings to.

### Blue light collaboration

The provisions of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 came into effect on 3 April 2017. These provisions included:

- introducing the duty to collaborate on all three emergency services;
- enabling PCCs to take on FRA functions where a local case is made; and
- enabling PCC representation on a Fire Authority with voting rights where the Fire Authority agrees.

These provisions are expected to change the structure and legal status of many police bodies and fire and rescue authorities.

The most visible evidence of collaboration being implemented is within the estates of both Fire and Police Services. This includes building a combined Police and Fire Station at Bromsgrove the Joint Operations and Communications Centre (JOCC) located within the grounds of the Police Headquarters at Hindlip Park.

The Authority will need to continue to seek different ways of working and collaborative opportunities in order to meet future budgetary requirements.

## Changes to financial reporting requirements

### Changes to the CIPFA 2017/18 Accounting Code

CIPFA have introduced other minor changes to the 2017/18 Code which confirm the going concern basis for local authorities, and updates for Leases, Service Concession arrangements and financial instruments.

### Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (the Regulations)

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is currently undertaking a review of the Regulations, which may be subject to change. The date for any proposed changes has yet to be confirmed, so it is not yet clear or whether they will apply to the 2017/18 financial statements.

Under the 2015 Regulations local authorities are required to publish their accounts along with the auditors opinion by 31 July 2018.

Based on performance last year this will be challenging, but is achievable. The finance team has been strengthened with a recently retired member of staff returning on a part time basis to support the year end close down and accounts production.

## Key challenges

### Financial pressures

The latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved in February. This reported that, with use of reserves totalling £4.5m, there is a balanced budget to 2021/22. Indicative projections for 2022/23 and 2023/24 show deficits of £697k and £616k respectively..

As a consequence it is estimated that the Authority will need to identify further on-going annual savings of around £700k by 2022/23 .

The Authority has a number of schemes in progress to close the remaining gap, but moving to a financial breakeven position for the long term remains a challenge.

### A changing workforce

The workforce is changing and becoming more diverse. Employees don't necessarily stay in the same profession for all of their working life. To attract and retain high quality staff the Authority needs to be able to offer flexible contracts to attract different groups. For example, people with childcare commitments. Firefighters tend not to serve the full 30 years now as they used to – this makes it challenging to get the numbers right.

### New Fire Service Inspectorate

As part of its Fire Reform agenda the Government has expanded the remit of the existing Police Inspectorate to cover the role of Fire services. The newly established HMICFRS will undertake inspections of Fire services going forward and has recently announced its first three pilot sites – Hereford & Worcester was not one of these.

## Our response

- We will consider your arrangements for managing and reporting your financial resources as part of our work in reaching our Value for Money conclusion.
- We will consider whether your financial position leads to uncertainty about the going concern assumption and will review any related disclosures in the financial statements.
- We will keep you informed of changes to the Regulations and any associated changes to financial reporting or public inspection requirements for 2017/18 through on-going discussions and invitations to our technical update workshops.
- As part of our opinion on your financial statements, we will consider whether your financial statements reflect the financial reporting changes in the 2017/18 CIPFA Code.

# Significant risks identified

Significant risks are defined by professional standards as risks that, in the judgement of the auditor, require special audit consideration because they have a higher risk of material misstatement. Such risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. In identifying risks, audit teams consider the nature of the risk, the potential magnitude of misstatement, and its likelihood.

Risk	Reason for risk identification	Key aspects of our proposed response to the risk
<b>The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions</b>	Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a rebuttable presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.	<p>Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at the Authority, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition</li><li>• opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited</li><li>• The culture and ethical frameworks of local authorities, including Hereford &amp; Worcester Fire Authority, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable</li></ul> <p>Therefore we do not consider this to be a significant risk for Hereford &amp; Worcester Fire Authority.</p>
<b>Management over-ride of controls</b>	<p>Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a non-rebuttable presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.</p> <p>Management over-ride of controls is a risk requiring special audit consideration.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• gain an understanding of the accounting estimates, judgements applied and decisions made by management and consider their reasonableness</li><li>• obtain a full listing of journal entries, identify and test unusual journal entries for appropriateness</li><li>• evaluate the rationale for any changes in accounting policies or significant unusual transactions.</li></ul>

# Significant risks identified

Risk	Reason for risk identification	Key aspects of our proposed response to the risk
<b>Valuation of pension fund net liability</b>	<p>The Authority's pension fund asset and liability as reflected in its balance sheet represent a significant estimate in the financial statements.</p> <p>We identified the valuation of the pension fund net liability as a risk requiring special audit consideration.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the controls put in place by management to ensure that the pension fund liability is not materially misstated. We will also assess whether these controls were implemented as expected and whether they are sufficient to mitigate the risk of material misstatement.</li><li>• Evaluate the competence, expertise and objectivity of the actuary who carried out your pension fund valuation. We will gain an understanding of the basis on which the valuation is carried out.</li><li>• Undertake procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made.</li><li>• Check the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in notes to the financial statements with the actuarial report from your actuary.</li></ul>

# Reasonably possible risks identified

Reasonably possible risks (RPRs) are, in the auditor's judgment, other risk areas which the auditor has identified as an area where the likelihood of material misstatement cannot be reduced to remote, without the need for gaining an understanding of the associated control environment, along with the performance of an appropriate level of substantive work. The risk of misstatement for an RPR is lower than that for a significant risk, and they are not considered to be areas that are highly judgmental, or unusual in relation to the day to day activities of the business.

Risk	Reason for risk identification	Key aspects of our proposed response to the risk
<b>Employee remuneration</b>	<p>Payroll expenditure represents a significant percentage (66%) of the Authority's operating expenses.</p> <p>As the payroll expenditure comes from a number of individual transactions and an interface with a sub-system there is a risk that payroll expenditure in the accounts could be understated. We therefore identified completeness of payroll expenses as a risk requiring particular audit attention.</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the Authority's accounting policy for recognition of payroll expenditure for appropriateness;</li> <li>• gain an understanding of the Authority's system for accounting for payroll expenditure and evaluate the design of the associated controls;</li> <li>• obtain year-end payroll reconciliation and ensure amount in accounts can be reconciled to ledger and through to payroll reports. Investigate significant adjusting items;</li> <li>• agree payroll related accruals (e.g. unpaid leave accrual) to supporting documents and review any estimates for reasonableness.</li> </ul>
<b>Operating expenses</b>	<p>Non-pay expenses on other goods and services also represents a significant percentage (22%) of the Authority's operating expenses. Management uses judgement to estimate accruals of un-invoiced costs.</p> <p>We identified completeness of non- pay expenses as a risk requiring particular audit attention.</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate the Authority's accounting policy for recognition of non-pay expenditure for appropriateness;</li> <li>• gain an understanding of the Authority's system for accounting for non-pay expenditure and evaluate the design of the associated controls;</li> <li>• document the accruals process and the controls management have put in place. Challenge any key underlying assumptions, the appropriateness of the source of data used and the basis for calculations;</li> <li>• obtain a listing from the bank statements of non-pay payments made in April, and ensure that they have been charged to the appropriate year.</li> </ul>

# Reasonably possible risks identified

Risk	Reason for risk identification	Key aspects of our proposed response to the risk
<b>Firefighters pension scheme</b>	<p>The Authority administers the firefighters pension schemes, with the Firefighters Pension Fund Account being included in the financial statements.</p> <p>We identified completeness and accuracy of pension benefits payable as a risk requiring particular audit attention.</p>	<p>We will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• review and document the control environment for firefighters' pensions benefits payments and conduct walkthrough testing to ensure controls in place have been functioning effectively in the period.</li><li>• test a sample of firefighters' pensions benefit payments for the period to ensure they have been accurately accounted for.</li><li>• agree pension disclosures in the financial statements to supporting evidence.</li><li>• complete substantive analytical procedures on the total pensions liability to ensure completeness of liability.</li></ul>



---

# Other matters

## Other work

In addition to our responsibilities under the Code of Practice, we have a number of other audit responsibilities, as follows:

- We carry out work to satisfy ourselves that disclosures made in your Annual Governance Statement are in line with the guidance issued and consistent with our knowledge of the Authority.
- We will read your Narrative Statement and check that it is consistent with the financial statements on which we give an opinion and that the disclosures included in it are in line with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice.
- We carry out work on your consolidation schedules for the Whole of Government Accounts process in accordance with NAO group audit instructions.
- We consider our other duties under the Act and the Code, as and when required, including:
  - giving electors the opportunity to raise questions about your 2017/18 financial statements, consider and decide upon any objections received in relation to the 2017/18 financial statements;
  - issue of a report in the public interest; and
  - making a written recommendation to the Authority, copied to the Secretary of State.
- We certify completion of our audit.

## Other material balances and transactions

Under International Standards on Auditing, "irrespective of the assessed risks of material misstatement, the auditor shall design and perform substantive procedures for each material class of transactions, account balance and disclosure". All other material balances and transaction streams will therefore be audited. However, the procedures will not be as extensive as the procedures adopted for the risks identified in this report.

## Going concern

As auditors, we are required to "obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern" (ISA (UK) 570). We will review management's assessment of the going concern assumption and evaluate the disclosures in the financial statements.

# Materiality

## The concept of materiality

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to the monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to acceptable accounting practice and applicable law. Misstatements, including omissions, are considered to be material if they, individually or in the aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

## Materiality for planning purposes

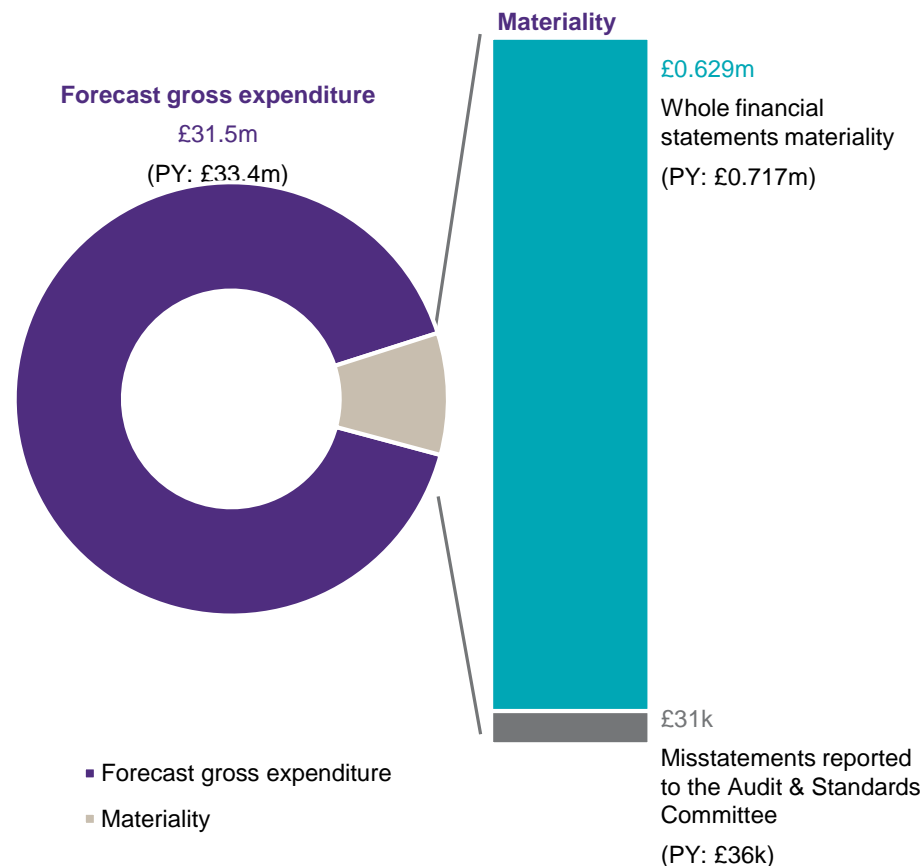
We propose to calculate financial statement materiality based on a proportion of the gross expenditure of the Authority for the financial year. In the prior year we used the same benchmark. We have determined planning materiality (the financial statements materiality determined at the planning stage of the audit) to be £0.629m (PY £0.717m), which equates to 2% of your forecast gross expenditure for the year. We design our procedures to detect errors in specific accounts at a lower level of precision. We have set a separate lower materiality level for the disclosure note on senior manager's remuneration. In view of the sensitivity of this note to the reader of the accounts, we have set a materiality level of £100k.

We reconsider planning materiality if, during the course of our audit engagement, we become aware of facts and circumstances that would have caused us to make a different determination of planning materiality.

## Matters we will report to the Audit & Standards 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 & Standards Committee any unadjusted misstatements of lesser amounts to the extent that these are identified by our audit work. Under ISA 260 (UK) '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) defines 'clearly trivial' as matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate and whether judged by any quantitative or qualitative criteria. In the context of the Authority, we propose that an individual difference could normally be considered to be clearly trivial if it is less than £31k (PY £36k).

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 & Standards Committee to assist it in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.



# Results of Interim Audit Work

The findings of our interim audit work, and the impact of our findings on the accounts audit approach, are summarised in the table below:

	Work performed	Conclusions and recommendations
Internal audit	<p>We have completed a high level review of internal audit's overall arrangements. Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention.</p> <p>We have also reviewed internal audit's work on the Authority's key financial systems to date. We have not identified any significant weaknesses impacting on our responsibilities.</p>	<p>Overall, we have concluded that the internal audit service provides an independent and satisfactory service to the Authority and that internal audit work contributes to an effective internal control environment.</p> <p>Our review of internal audit work to date has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.</p>
Entity level controls	<p>We have obtained an understanding of the overall control environment relevant to the preparation of the financial statements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication and enforcement of integrity and ethical values</li><li>• Commitment to competence</li><li>• Participation by those charged with governance</li><li>• Management's philosophy and operating style</li><li>• Organisational structure</li><li>• Assignment of authority and responsibility</li><li>• Human resource policies and practices</li></ul>	<p>Our work has identified no material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's financial statements.</p>

	Work performed	Conclusions and recommendations
<b>Review of information technology controls</b>	Our information systems specialist performed a high level review of the general IT control environment, as part of the overall review of the internal controls system.	Our work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.
<b>Walkthrough testing</b>	<p>We have completed walkthrough tests of the Authority's controls operating in areas where we consider that there is a risk of material misstatement to the financial statements – employee remuneration, firefighters' pension fund and operating expenses.</p> <p>Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention. Internal controls have been implemented by the Authority in accordance with our documented understanding.</p>	Our work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.
<b>Journal entry controls</b>	We have reviewed the Authority's journal entry policies and procedures as part of determining our journal entry testing strategy and have not identified any material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's control environment or financial statements.	Results of our detailed testing will be reported in our Audit Findings Report in July 2018.
<b>Early substantive testing</b>	<p>We have completed early testing in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee Remuneration</li> <li>• Operating Expenses</li> <li>• Revenue</li> </ul>	We have not identified any issues to report in any of the other areas where we have undertaken early substantive testing.

# Value for Money arrangements

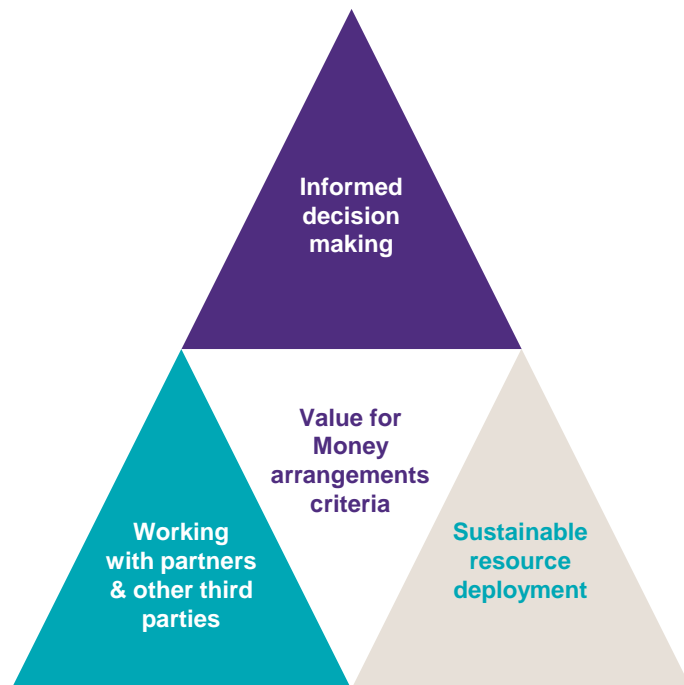
## Background to our VFM approach

The NAO issued its guidance for auditors on Value for Money work for 2017/18 in November 2017. The guidance states that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Authority has proper arrangements in place.

The guidance identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

*"In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people."*

This is supported by three sub-criteria, as set out below:



## Significant VFM risks

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



### Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved in February. This reported that, with use of reserves totalling £4.5m, there is a balanced budget to 2021/22. Indicative projections for 2022/23 and 2023/24 show deficits of £697k and £616k respectively..

As a consequence it is estimated that the Authority will need to identify further on-going annual savings of around £700k by 2022/23 .

We will:

- a) examine the savings plans and efficiencies in the MTFP which have been identified to achieve the forecasts;
- b) update our understanding of the main schemes to ensure they remain robust and realistic;
- c) look at the plans to address the longer term shortfall to ensure plans to return to a recurrent break even position from 2022/23 onwards are realistic.

# Audit logistics, team & audit fees



## Phil Jones, Engagement Lead

Phil's role will be to:

- lead our relationship with you;
- be a key contact for the Chief Fire Officer, the Director of Finance & Assets (Treasurer) and the Audit & Standards Committee;
- ensure that Grant Thornton's full service offering is at your disposal; and
- take overall responsibility for the delivery of a high quality audit, meeting the highest professional standards and adding value to the Authority.



## Neil Preece, Audit Manager

Neil's role will be to manage the delivery of a high quality audit, meeting the highest professional standards and adding value to the Authority.



## Allison Thomas, Audit Incharge

Allison's role will be to:

- be the day to day contact for Authority finance staff;
- take responsibility for ensuring there is effective communication and understanding by finance team of audit requirements;
- have day to day responsibility for the running of the audit and first point of contact;
- focus on the more technical aspect of the audit and to discuss emerging national technical matters as they arise and deal with technical matters raised by the you throughout the year in a timely manner.

## Audit fees

The planned audit fees are no less than £32,872 (PY: £32,872) for the financial statements audit. In setting your fee, we have assumed that the scope of the audit, and the Authority and its activities, do not significantly change.

## Our requirements

To ensure the audit is delivered on time and to avoid any additional fees, we have detailed our expectations and requirements in the following section 'Early Close'. If the requirements detailed overleaf are not met, we reserve the right to postpone our audit visit and charge fees to reimburse us for any additional costs incurred.

# Early close

## Meeting the early close timeframe

Bringing forward the statutory date for publication of audited local government accounts to 31 July this year, across the whole sector, is a significant challenge for local authorities and auditors alike. For authorities, the time available to prepare the accounts is curtailed, while, as auditors we have a shorter period to complete our work and face an even more significant peak in our workload than previously.

We have carefully planned how we can make the best use of the resources available to us during the final accounts period. As well as increasing the overall level of resources available to deliver audits, we have focused on:

- bringing forward as much work as possible to interim audits
- starting work on final accounts audits as early as possible, by agreeing which authorities will have accounts prepared significantly before the end of May
- seeking further efficiencies in the way we carry out our audits
- working with you to agree detailed plans to make the audits run smoothly, including early agreement of audit dates, working paper and data requirements and early discussions on potentially contentious items.

We are satisfied that, if all these plans are implemented, we will be able to complete your audit and those of our other local government clients in sufficient time to meet the earlier deadline.

## Client responsibilities

Where individual clients do not deliver to the timetable agreed, we need to ensure that this does not impact on audit quality or absorb a disproportionate amount of time, thereby disadvantaging other clients. We will therefore conduct audits in line with the timetable set out in audit plans (as detailed on page 12). Where the elapsed time to complete an audit exceeds that agreed due to a client not meeting its obligations we will not be able to maintain a team on site. Similarly, where additional resources are needed to complete the audit due to a client not meeting their obligations we are not able to guarantee the delivery of the audit by the statutory deadline. Such audits are unlikely to be re-started until very close to, or after the statutory deadline. In addition, it is highly likely that these audits will incur additional audit fees.

## Our requirements

To minimise the risk of a delayed audit or additional audit fees being incurred, you need to ensure that you:

- produce draft financial statements of good quality by the deadline you have agreed with us, including all notes, the narrative report and the Annual Governance Statement
- ensure that good quality working papers are available at the start of the audit, in accordance with the working paper requirements schedule that we have shared with you
- ensure that the agreed data reports are available to us at the start of the audit and are reconciled to the values in the accounts, in order to facilitate our selection of samples
- ensure that all appropriate staff are available on site throughout (or as otherwise agreed) the planned period of the audit
- respond promptly and adequately to audit queries.

In return, we will ensure that:

- the audit runs smoothly with the minimum disruption to your staff
- you are kept informed of progress through the use of an issues tracker and weekly meetings during the audit
- we are available to discuss issues with you prior to and during your preparation of the financial statements.

# Independence & non-audit services

## Auditor independence

Ethical Standards and ISA (UK) 260 require us to give you timely disclosure of all significant facts and matters that may bear upon the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm or covered persons. relating to our independence. We encourage you to contact us to discuss these or any other independence issues with us. We will also discuss with you if we make additional significant judgements surrounding independence matters.

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and we as a firm, and each covered person, confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements. Further, we have complied with the requirements of the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 issued in December 2016 which sets out supplementary guidance on ethical requirements for auditors of local public bodies.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Ethical Standard. For the purposes of our audit we have made enquiries of all Grant Thornton UK LLP teams providing services to the Authority.

## Non-audit services

No non-audit services were identified.

Service	Fees £	Threats	Safeguards
Audit related			
None			
Non-audit related			
None			

Any changes and full details of all fees charged for audit related and non-audit related services by Grant Thornton UK LLP and by Grant Thornton International Limited network member Firms will be included in our Audit Findings report at the conclusion of the audit.



---

# Appendices

## A. Revised ISAs

# Appendix A: Revised ISAs

Detailed below is a summary of the key changes impacting the auditor's report for audits of financial statement for periods commencing on or after 17 June 2016.

Section of the auditor's report	Description of the requirements
<b>Conclusions relating to going concern</b>	We will be required to conclude and report whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The directors use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate</li><li>• The directors have disclosed identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern.</li></ul>
<b>Material uncertainty related to going</b>	We will need to include a brief description of the events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern when a material uncertainty has been identified and adequately disclosed in the financial statements. Going concern material uncertainties are no longer reported in an Emphasis of Matter section in our audit report.
<b>Other information</b>	We will be required to include a section on other information which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsibilities of management and auditors regarding other information</li><li>• A statement that the opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information unless required by law or regulation</li><li>• Reporting inconsistencies or misstatements where identified</li></ul>
<b>Additional responsibilities for directors and the auditor</b>	We will be required to include the respective responsibilities for directors and us, as auditors, regarding going concern.
<b>Format of the report</b>	The opinion section appears first followed by the basis of opinion section.

