DRAFT

This version of the report is a draft. Its contents and subject matter remain under review and its contents may change and be expanded as part of the finalisation of the report.

The Audit Plan for Shropshire Council

Year ended 31 March 2017

February 2017

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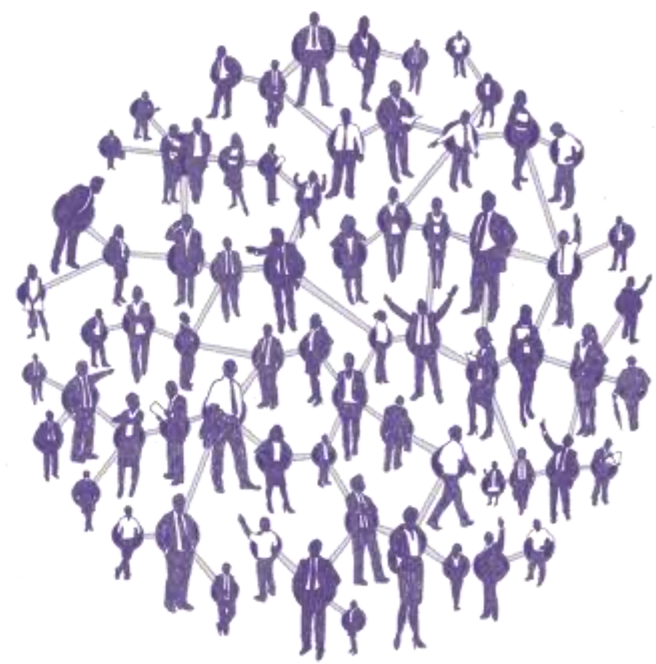

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February 2017

Dear members of the Audit Committee

Audit Plan for Shropshire Council for the year ending 31 March 2017

This Audit Plan sets out for the benefit of those charged with governance (in the case of Shropshire Council, the Audit Committee), an overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260. This document is to help you understand the consequences of our work, discuss issues of risk and the concept of materiality with us, and identify any areas where you may request us to undertake additional procedures. It also helps us gain a better understanding of the Council and your environment. The contents of the Plan have been discussed with management.

We are required to perform our audit in line with Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2015. Our responsibilities under the Code are to:

-give an opinion on the Council's financial statements

-satisfy ourselves the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

As auditors we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland), which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view.

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. In particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect the Council or all weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for yourbenefit. 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.

We look forward to working with you during the course of the audit.

Yours sincerely

Mark Stocks

Engagement Lead

Contents

Understanding your business and key developments

Developments

Integration with health sector

You have worked with your local health and social care partners to develop a Sustainability and Transformation Plan. This five-year plan requires genuine partnership across a number of different organisations that historically have had misaligned funding regimes and a lack of a robust shared strategy.

Delivering the STP requires significant commitment from all partners to ensure that they appropriately influence and deliver the direction of the plan. The health economy has a significant deficit and has not made the required progress in delivering service reconfiguration. The Council has its own challenges in funding social care. These challenges are significant and can only be solved by all partners working together.

Highways network asset (HNA)

In November, 2016 CIPFA/ LASAAC announced a deferral of measuring the HNA at Depreciated Replacement Cost for 2016/17. CIPFA/LASAAC will review this position at its meeting in March 2017 with a view to implementation in 2017/18. It is anticipated that the 2017/18 Code will be on the same basis as planned for 2016/17, i.e. not requiring restatement of preceding year information.

Closure of ip&e Ltd

2016/17 will see the closure of ip&e Ltd. The Council is now at the final stage of closing down the company and transferring the services back to the Council.

Key challenges

Autumn Statement

The Chancellor detailed plans in the Autumn Statement to increase funding for Housing and Infrastructure, and further extend devolved powers to Local Authorities. No plans were announced to increase funding for adult social care. Due to the profile of the local populace this presents a challenge to Shropshire going forward.

Financial resilience

The growth in Adult Social Care and the costs of other statutory responsibilities are not affordable under the current funding model in place. The Council is therefore using short and medium term plans to attempt to manage this, in advance of the Government Fair Funding Review. There is a significant risk that the Council's financial position will impact on service delivery, both statutory and non-statutory in future years.

The Council is proposing to close its forecast budget gap of £40 million to 2018/19 by fully utilising the earmarked reserves. The release of these reserves is conditional upon generating and using capital receipts to replenish these reserves.

Key performance indicators

Measure (as at December 2016)	Value £'000
Net controllable budget	204,527
Projected outturn	204,283
Projected underspend	(244)

Financial reporting changes

CIPFA Code of Practice 2016/17 (the Code)

Changes to the Code in 2016/17 reflect aims of the 'Telling the Story' project, to streamline the financial statements to be more in line with internal organisational reporting and improve accessibility to the reader of the financial statements.

The changes affect the presentation of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statements, segmental reporting disclosures and a new Expenditure and Funding Analysis note has been introduced. The Code also requires these amendments to be reflected in the 2015/16 comparatives by way of a prior period adjustment.

Earlier closedown

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require councils to bring forward the approval and audit of financial statements to 31 July by the 2017/2018 financial year.

For the 2016/17 financial statements, we are working with the Council's accounts closedown team to achieve a deadline of 31 March 2017 for unaudited accounts, and an audit completion deadline of 31 July 2017, (albeit acknowledging that the accounts themselves will not be approved and signed until the Audit Committee have met in September). This should stand us in good stead to meet next year's deadline of 31 July 2018.

Our response

- We will consider your arrangements for managing your financial resources as part of the value for money conclusion audit. We will consider the impact of adult social care costs and the wider health economies finances on the Council.
- We will discuss with you your progress in implementing the HNA requirements and in the closure of ip&e, highlighting any areas of good practice or concern which we have identified.
- We aim to complete all our substantive audit work of your financial statements by 31 July 2017. Please note this will be dependent upon the timely receipt of all required supporting documentation.
- We will consider whether your financial statements accurately reflect the financial reporting changes in the 2016/17 Code.

Materiality

In performing our audit, we apply the concept of materiality, following the requirements of International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) (ISA) 320: Materiality in planning and performing an audit. 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. An item does not necessarily have to be large to be considered to have a material effect on the financial statements. An item may be considered to be material by nature, for example, when greater precision is required (e.g. senior manager salaries and allowances).

We determine planning materiality (materiality for the financial statements as a whole determined at the planning stage of the audit) in order to estimate the tolerable level of misstatement in the financial statements, assist in establishing the scope of our audit engagement and audit tests, calculate sample sizes and assist in evaluating the effect of known and likely misstatements in the financial statements.

We have determined planning materiality based upon professional judgement in the context of our knowledge of the Council. In line with previous years, we have calculated financial statements materiality based on a proportion of the gross revenue expenditure of the Council. For purposes of planning the audit we have determined overall materiality to be £10,409k (being 1.75% of gross revenue expenditure). Our assessment of materiality is kept under review throughout the audit process and we will advise you if we revise this during the audit.

Under ISA 450, auditors also set an amount below which misstatements would be clearly trivial and would not need to be accumulated or reported to those charged with governance because we would not expect that the accumulation of such amounts would have a material effect on the financial statements. "Trivial" matters are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate and whether judged by any criteria of size, nature or circumstances. We have defined the amount below which misstatements would be clearly trivial to be £520k.

ISA 320 also requires auditors to determine separate, lower, materiality levels where there are 'particular classes of transactions, account balances or disclosures for which misstatements of lesser amounts than materiality for the financial statements as a whole could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users'. We have identified the following items where separate materiality levels are appropriate:

Balance/transaction/disclosure	Explanation	Materiality level
Disclosures of senior manager salaries and allowances in the remuneration report.	Due to public interest in these disclosures and the statutory requirement for them to be made.	£20k
Disclosures of transactions with related parties.	Due to public interest in these disclosures and the statutory requirement for them to be made. Related party transactions have to be disclosed if they are material to the Council or the related party.	£20k, although any errors identified by testing will be assessed individually, with due regard being given to the materiality of the other party.

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; Judgments about materiality are made in light of surrounding circumstances, and are affected by the size or nature of a misstatement, or a combination of both; and Judgments about matters that are material to users of the financial statements are based on a consideration of the common financial information needs of users as a group. The possible effect of misstatements on specific individual users, whose needs may vary widely, is not considered. (ISA (UK and Ireland) 320)

Significant risks identified

An audit is focused on risks. Significant risks are defined by ISAs (UK and Ireland) as risks that, in the judgment of the auditor, require special audit consideration. In identifying risks, audit teams consider the nature of the risk, the potential magnitude of misstatement, and its likelihood. Significant risks are those risks that have a higher risk of material misstatement.

Significant risk	Description	Audit procedures
The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions	Under ISA (UK and Ireland) 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue streams may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue. This presumption can be rebutted if the auditor concludes that there is no risk of material misstatement due to fraud relating to revenue recognition.	**Work planned:** Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at Shropshire Council, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted, because: ▪ there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition ▪ opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited ▪ The culture and ethical frameworks of local authorities, including Shropshire Council, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable Therefore, we do not consider this to be a significant risk for Shropshire Council.
Management over-ride of controls	Under ISA (UK and Ireland) 240 there is a non-rebuttable presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.	**Work completed to date:** • Review of journal entry process. **Further work planned:** • Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management • Review of journal entry process and selection of unusual journal entries for testing back to supporting documentation [Modify for work to be completed] • Review of unusual significant transactions

"Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, due to either size or nature, and that therefore occur infrequently. Judgmental matters may include the development of accounting estimates for which there is significant measurement uncertainty." (ISA (UK and Ireland) 315) . In making the review of unusual significant transactions "the auditor shall treat identified significant related party transactions outside the entity's normal course of business as giving rise to significant risks." (ISA (UK and Ireland) 550)

Significant risks identified (continued)

We have also identified the following significant risks of material misstatement from our understanding of the entity. We set out below the work we have completed to date and the work we plan to address these risks.

Significant risk	Description	Audit procedures
Valuation of property, plant and equipment	The Council revalues its assets on a rolling basis over a five year period. The Code requires that the Council ensures that the carrying value at the balance sheet date is not materially different from the current value. This represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements.	**Work planned:** ▪ Review of management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate. • Review of the competence, expertise and objectivity of any management experts used. • Review of the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work • Discussions with valuer about the basis on which the valuation is carried out and challenge of the key assumptions. • Review and challenge of the information used by the valuer to ensure it is robust and consistent with our understanding. • Testing of revaluations made during the year to ensure they are input correctly into the Council's asset register • Evaluation of the assumptions made by management for those assets not revalued during the year and how management has satisfied themselves that these are not materially different to current value.
Valuation of pension fund net liability	The Council's pension fund asset and liability as reflected in its balance sheet represent a significant estimate in the financial statements.	**Work planned:** • We will 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. • We will review 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. • We will undertake procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made. • We will review the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in notes to the financial statements with the actuarial report from your actuary.

Significant risks identified (continued)

Significant risk	Description	Audit procedures
Changes to the presentation of local authority financial statements	CIPFA has been working on the 'Telling the Story' project, for which the aim was to streamline the financial statements and improve accessibility to the user and this has resulted in changes to the 2016/17 Code of Practice. The changes affect the presentation of income and expenditure in the financial statements and associated disclosure notes. A prior period adjustment (PPA) to restate the 2015/16 comparative figures is also required.	**Work completed to date:** • We have documented and evaluated the process for the recording the required financial reporting changes to the 2016/17 financial statements. • We have reviewed the re-classification of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) comparatives to ensure that they are in line with the Authority's internal reporting structure. • We have reviewed the appropriateness of the revised grouping of entries within the Movement In Reserves Statement (MIRS). **Further work planned:** • We will test the classification of income and expenditure for 2016/17 recorded within the Cost of Services section of the CIES. • We will test the completeness of income and expenditure by reviewing the reconciliation of the CIES to the general ledger. • We will test the classification of income and expenditure reported within the new Expenditure and Funding Analysis (EFA) note to the financial statements. • We will review the new segmental reporting disclosures within the 2016/17 financial statements to ensure compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice.

Other 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 or other risk 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.

Reasonably possible risks	Description of risk	Audit procedures
Operating expenses	Year end creditors and accruals are understated or not recorded in the correct period.	**Work completed to date:** • We have undertaken walkthrough tests to confirm operation of the controls • We have documented the processes and controls in place around accounting for operating expenses **Further work planned:** • We will test the control account reconciliations • We will search for unrecorded liabilities by testing whether the cut off of post year end payments is appropriate • We will verify creditors to supporting documentation and subsequent payments to ensure that creditors are correctly classified and recorded in the correct period
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration accruals are understated	**Work planned:** ▪ We will document the processes and controls in place around accounting for employee remuneration ▪ We will undertake walkthrough tests to confirm the operation of the controls ▪ We will agree staff costs per the financial statements to the General Ledger and the payroll system ▪ We will undertake monthly trend analysis to gain assurance that there have been no significant omissions from staff costs recorded

"In respect of some risks, the auditor may judge that it is not possible or practicable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence only from substantive procedures. Such risks may relate to the inaccurate or incomplete recording of routine and significant classes of transactions or account balances, the characteristics of which often permit highly automated processing with little or no manual intervention. In such cases, the entity's controls over such risks are relevant to the audit and the auditor shall obtain an understanding of them." (ISA (UK and Ireland) 315)

Other risks identified (continued)

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 and Ireland) 570). We will review the management's assessment of the going concern assumption and the disclosures in the financial statements.

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 the previous sections but will include:

- Movement in Reserves Statement and associated notes
- Statement of cash flows and associated notes
- Financing and investment income and expenditure
- Taxation and non-specific grants
- Capital expenditure and capital financing note
- Property, plant and equipment
- Investment property
- Leases note
- Financial instruments note
- Debtors
- Cash and cash equivalents
- Creditors
- Useable and unusable reserves
- Officers' remuneration note
- Schools balances and transactions
- Investments (long and short term)
- Borrowings and other liabilities (long and short term)
- New note disclosures
- Related party transactions note
- Housing Revenue Account and associated notes
- Collection Fund and associated notes

Group audit scope and risk assessment

In accordance with ISA (UK and Ireland) 600, as group auditor we are required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the components and the consolidation process to express an opinion on whether the group financial statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

Component[/s]	Significant?	Level of response required under ISA (UK and Ireland) 600	Risks identified	Planned audit approach
West Mercia Energy	No	Analytical	N/A	Desktop review performed by Grant Thornton
Shropshire Towns & Rural (STAR) Housing Ltd.	Yes	Audit of component financial information	Risk of material misstatement due to errors in STAR Housing accounts or consolidation errors.	▪ We will write to the auditors of STAR Housing Ltd. to obtain assurance over their accounts ▪ We will consider the need to perform additional tests to obtain sufficient assurance
ip&e Ltd.	No	Analytical	N/A	Desktop review performed by Grant Thornton UK

Key changes within the group:

- Services previously provided by ip&e are in the process of being brought back in house by Shropshire Council. We therefore expect there to be significantly less transactions involving this entity than in prior periods.

Audit scope:

Comprehensive – the component is of such significance to the group as a whole that an audit of the components financial statements is required

Targeted – the component is significant to the Group, audit evidence will be obtained by performing targeted audit procedures rather than a full audit

Analytical – the component is not significant to the Group and audit risks can be addressed sufficiently by applying analytical procedures at the Group level

Involvement in the work of component auditors

The nature, time and extent of our involvement in the work of component auditors will begin with a discussion on risks, guidance on designing procedures, participation in meetings, followed by the review of relevant aspects of audit documentation and meeting with appropriate members of management.

Value for Money

Background

The Code requires us to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VfM) conclusion.

The National Audit Office (NAO) issued its guidance for auditors on value for money work for 2016/17 in November 2016. The guidance states that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Council 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 opposite:

Sub-criteria	Detail
Informed decision making	• Acting in the public interest, through demonstrating and applying the principles and values of sound governance • Understanding and using appropriate cost and performance information (including, where relevant, information from regulatory/monitoring bodies) to support informed decision making and performance management • Reliable and timely financial reporting that supports the delivery of strategic priorities • Managing risks effectively and maintaining a sound system of internal control
Sustainable resource deployment	• Planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions • Managing and utilising assets effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities • Planning, organising and developing the workforce effectively to deliver strategic priorities.
Working with partners and other third parties	• Working with third parties effectively to deliver strategic priorities • Commissioning services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities • Procuring supplies and services effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.

Value for Money (continued)

Risk assessment

We have carried out an initial risk assessment based on the NAO's auditor's guidance note (AGN03). In our initial risk assessment, we considered:

- our cumulative knowledge of the Council, including work performed in previous years in respect of the VfM conclusion and the opinion on the financial statements.
- the findings of other inspectorates and review agencies.
- any illustrative significant risks identified and communicated by the NAO in its Supporting Information.
- any other evidence which we consider necessary to conclude on your arrangements.

We have identified significant risks which we are required to communicate to you. These are set out overleaf.

Reporting

The results of our VfM audit work and the key messages arising will be reported in our Audit Findings Report and in the Annual Audit Letter. We will issue a separate report in respect of VfM.

We will include our conclusion in our auditor's report on your financial statements which we will give by 30 September 2017.

Value for money (continued)

We set out below the significant risks we have identified as a result of our initial risk assessment and the work we propose to address these risks.

Significant risk	Link to sub-criteria	Work proposed to address
Financial resilience over the medium to long term Despite opting to increase Council Tax by the maximum available rate, the Council is required to identify savings to close a funding gap of some £76.5 million by 2019/20. This is in addition to a significant savings program. Achieving the required efficiencies will be extremely challenging. In particular, the growth in Adult Social Care and the costs of other statutory responsibilities are not affordable under the current funding model in place. In the short to medium term, the Council is proposing to close its forecast budget gap of £40 million to 2018/19 by fully utilising the earmarked reserves. There is a significant risk that the Council's financial position will impact on service delivery, both statutory and non-statutory in future years. We also note that the health economy has a significant deficit and has not made significant progress in delivering service reconfiguration.	This links to the Council's arrangements for sustainable resource deployment by planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and using appropriate cost and performance information to support informed decision making. This links to the Council's arrangements for informed decision making, understanding and using appropriate cost and performance information (including, where relevant, information from regulatory/monitoring bodies) to support informed decision making and performance management.	We will review the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and monthly financial monitoring reports, assessing the assumptions used. We will consider the robustness of the Council's delivery plans and its reporting arrangements for the MTFS. We will consider the impact of adult social care costs and the wider health economies finances on the Council.
Replacement of IT infrastructure / business continuity Previous reviews, by external audit, internal audit and other stakeholders, have identified a requirement for the Council to design and implement a business continuity and disaster recovery strategy to mitigate the risk of a severe IT failure or damage to systems through a catastrophic event. This should be supported by a program to replace outdated IT infrastructure. Failure to achieve this represents a significant risk to the on-going functioning of the Council.	This links to the Council's arrangements for informed decision making, managing risks effectively and maintaining a sound system of internal control. This links to the Council's arrangements for sustainable resource deployment by managing and utilising assets effectively to support the delivery of strategic priorities.	We will review the risk assurance frameworks established by the Council in respect of IT infrastructure to establish how the Council is identifying, managing and monitoring these risks. We will consider the longer term IT infrastructure plans and how these are linked to supporting the long term vision of the Council in relation to service provision.

Other audit responsibilities

In addition to our responsibilities under the Code of Practice in relation to your financial statements and arrangements foreconomy, efficiency and effectiveness we have a number of other audit responsibilities, as follows:

- We will undertake work to satisfy ourselves that the disclosures made in your Annual Governance Statement are in line with CIPFA/SOLACE guidance and consistent with our knowledge of the Council.
- 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 will carry out work on your consolidation schedules for the Whole of Government Accounts process in accordance with NAO instructions to auditors.
- We consider our other duties under the Act and the Code, as and when required, including:
    - We will give electors the opportunity to raise questions about your financial statements and consider and decide upon any objections received in relation to the financial statements;
    - issue of a report in the public interest; and
    - making a written recommendation to the Council, copied to the Secretary of State
- We certify completion of our audit.

The audit cycle

The audit timeline

Key dates:

- Year end: 31 March 2017
- Close out: July 2017
- Audit committee: September 2017
- Sign off: September 2017

Audit phases:

- Planning January 2017
- Interim January / March 2017
- Final 26 June – 28 July 2017
- Completion September 2017
- Debrief October 2017

Planning – Key elements

- Planning meeting with management to inform audit planning and agree audit timetable
- Issue audit working paper requirements to management
- Discussions with those charged with governance and internal audit to inform audit planning
- Document design effectiveness of key accounting systems and processes

Interim – Key elements

- Discuss draft Audit Plan with management
- Meeting with Audit Committee to discuss the Audit Plan
- Issue the Audit Plan to management and Audit Committee
- Review of key judgements and estimates
- Early substantive audit testing
- Review of Value for Money arrangements
- Issue Progress report to management and Audit Committee

Final – Key elements

- Audit teams onsite to complete detailed audit testing
- Weekly update meetings with management
- Review of Value for Money arrangements
- Audit of group reporting consolidation schedule

Completion – Key elements

- Issue draft Audit Findings to management
- Meeting with management to discuss Audit Findings
- Issue draft Audit Findings to Audit Committee
- Audit Findings presentation to Audit Committee
- Finalise approval and signing of financial statements and audit report
- Submission of WGA assurance statement
- Annual Audit Letter

Audit Fees

Fees

	Proposed fee £
Council audit	133,845
Grant certification	11,505
Work to respond to a elector's objection on 2015/16 financial statements	TBC
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	**147,790**

Our fee assumptions include:

- Supporting schedules to all figures in the accounts are supplied by the agreed dates and in accordance with the agreed upon information request list
- The scope of the audit, and the Council and its activities, have not changed significantly
- The Council will make available management and accounting staff to help us locate information and to provide explanations
- The accounts presented for audit are materially accurate, supporting working papers and evidence agree to the accounts, and all audit queries are resolved promptly.

Grant certification

- Our fees for grant certification cover only housing benefit subsidy certification, which falls under the remit of Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited
- Fees in respect of other grant work, such as reasonable assurance reports, are shown under 'Fees for other services'.

Fees for other services

Fees for other services detailed on the following page, reflect those agreed at the time of issuing our Audit Plan. Any changes will be reported in our Audit Findings Report and Annual Audit Letter.

What is included within our fees

- A reliable and risk-focused audit appropriate for your business
- Invitations to events hosted by Grant Thornton in your sector, as well as the wider finance community
- Ad-hoc telephone calls and queries
- Technical briefings and updates
- Regular contact to discuss strategy and other important areas
- A review of accounting policies for appropriateness and consistency
- Annual technical updates for members of your finance team

Independence and non-audit services

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 Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards and we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards.

For the purposes of our audit we have made enquiries of all Grant Thornton UK LLP teams providing services to Client Name. The following audit related and non-audit services were identified for the Council for 2016/17:

Fees for other services

Service	Fees £	Planned outputs
Audit related		
Audit of STAR Housing Ltd.	14,785	Opinion to be provided prior to group sign off deadline of 30 September 2017
Audit of ip&e Ltd.	TBC	Opinion to be provided prior to group sign off deadline of 30 September 2017
Tax work for ip&e Ltd.	TBC	Tax support for the submission of ip&e Ltd returns
Audit of West Mercia Energy (fee being equally split between Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire)	TBC	Opinion to be provided prior to group sign off deadline of 30 September 2017
Grant work outside the PSAA regime – to be confirmed	TBC	Reports to be issued as required

The amounts detailed are fees agreed to-date for audit related and non-audit services (to be) undertaken by Grant Thornton UK LLP (and Grant Thornton International Limited network member Firms) in the current financial year. Full details of all fees charged for audit and non-audit 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.

The above services are consistent with the Council's policy on the allotment of non-audit work to your auditors.

Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance

International Standard on Auditing (UK and Ireland) (ISA) 260, as well as other ISAs (UK and Ireland) prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table opposite.

This document, The Audit Plan, outlines our audit strategy and plan to deliver the audit, while The Audit Findings will be issued prior to approval of the financial statements and will present key issues and other matters arising from the audit, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

We will communicate any adverse or unexpected findings affecting the audit on a timely basis, either informally or via a report to the Council.

Respective responsibilities

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit in accordance with ISAs (UK and Ireland), which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance.

This plan has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (http://www.psaa.co.uk/appointing-auditors/terms-of-appointment/)

We have been appointed as the Council's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing external auditors to local public bodies in England at the time of our appointment. As external auditors, we have a broad remit covering finance and governance matters.

Our annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the NAO and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work (https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/about-code/). Our work considers the Council's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the Council 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 Council is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our communication plan	Audit Plan	Audit Findings
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	✓	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit. Form, timing and expected general content of communications	✓	
Views about the qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting and financial reporting practices, significant matters and issues arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		✓
Confirmation of independence and objectivity	✓	✓
A statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, relationships and other matters which might be thought to bear on independence. Details of non-audit work performed by Grant Thornton UK LLP and network firms, together with fees charged. Details of safeguards applied to threats to independence	✓	✓
Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit		✓
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or others which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		✓
Non compliance with laws and regulations		✓
Expected modifications to the auditor's report, or emphasis of matter		✓
Uncorrected misstatements		✓
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		✓
Significant matters in relation to going concern	✓	✓
Matters in relation to the group audit, including: Scope of work on components, involvement of group auditors in component audits, concerns over quality of component auditors' work, limitations of scope on the group audit, fraud or suspected fraud	✓	✓

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