

The Audit Plan for Westminster City Council

Year ended 31 March 2017

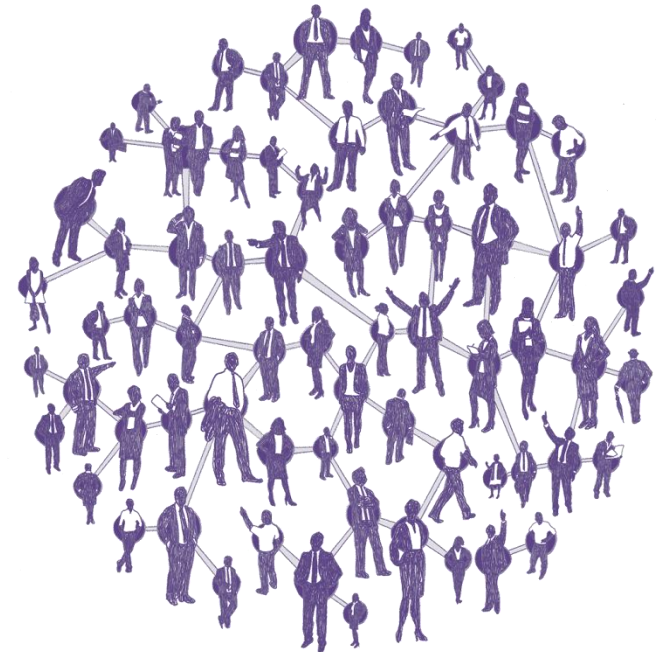
9 February 2017

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Westminster City Council
Westminster City Hall
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9 February 2017

Dear Members of the Audit and Performance Committee

Audit Plan for Westminster City 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 Westminster City Council, the Audit and Performance 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 your benefit. 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

Paul Dossett

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Understanding your business and key developments

Developments

Highways network asset (HNA)

On the 14 November, 2016 CIPFA/LASAAC announced a deferral of measuring the Highways Network Asset at Depreciated Replacement Cost in local authority financial statements for 2016/17. This deferral is due to delays in obtaining updated central rates for valuations.

CIPFA/LASAAC will review this position at its meeting in March 2017 with a view to implementation in 2017/18. It currently anticipates 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.

The Council has undertaken a lot of work before the CIPFA announcement and is well placed to implement the change when the Code requires it.

Integration with health sector

Wider transfers of responsibility for public health to local government, and more specifically Better Care Fund (BCF) plans and the associated pooled budgets have been operational during the year.

The Council is working with its health sector partners to agree a funding plan for the area.

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 but Council's have been allowed subsequently to raise a 3 % precept in 2017/18 for adult social care.

Capital projects

The Council has a large capital programme and has to manage these projects alongside other strategic priorities. The changing government focus on cities around the country means that a key project for the Council, the West End Partnership, is subject to Treasury approval as the Government considers how it balances investment across England.

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. Westminster City Council is already achieving this timeline and are the clear leaders in this area.

De-cluttering of the Accounts

During the 2016/17 year the Council has been working towards producing a slim-line set of accounts, aiming to significantly reduce the number of pages in order to make them more accessible to the everyday user, while still ensuring compliance with the 2016/17 Code.

Our response

- We will discuss with you your progress in implementing the HNA requirements, 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 5 May 2017 for reporting to the Audit & Performance Committee on 9 May 2017. As in 2015/16, we will be unable to sign the audit opinion until 15 July 2017.
- As part of our opinion on your financial statements, we will consider whether your financial statements accurately reflect the financial reporting changes in the 2016/17 Code
- We will review the Council's progress in managing its responsibilities for public health and how it is working with partners, as part of our work in reaching our VFM conclusion.
- We will keep you informed of changes to the financial reporting requirements for 2016/17 through on-going discussions and invitations to our technical update workshops.
- We will work closely with you to de-clutter your accounts while still ensuring compliance with 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 £18,925k (being 1.85% of gross revenue expenditure). In the previous year, we determined materiality to be £15,344k (being 1.50% of gross revenue expenditure). The reason for the lower materiality in the previous year was the implementation of the new financial ledger system under the Managed Services programme. As progress has been made in the operation of the ledger since the previous year, we have raised our materiality threshold for 2016/17. 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 £946k.

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 not identified any items which require a separate materiality level.

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
<p>The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at Westminster City Council, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition can be rebutted, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Westminster City Council, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable. This framework extends to the managed service provider. <p>Therefore do not consider this to be a significant risk for Westminster City Council.</p>
<p>Management over-ride of controls</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management in the prior year and discussions about the proposed treatment in 2016/17 • Review of journal entry process within the managed services environment <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management • Selection of unusual journal entries for testing back to supporting documentation • 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
<p>Managed Services Partnership (MSP)</p>	<p>The tri-borough councils implemented a new financial ledger through a managed services partnership with BT from 1 April 2015. There have been a number of difficulties with the implementation which give rise to a significant risk of completeness of the balances in the financial statements. The Council is proactively managing the service problems and is in regular contact with BT, including finance officers visiting the BT office on a monthly basis. Significant improvements have been made since the previous year but there remains a risk to the audit opinion.</p>	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have updated our understanding of the Council's relationship with the managed service provider during the 2016/17 year • We have performed a review of the control environment around the posting of journals on the ledger and how these operate across the tri-borough <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will keep up-to-date with the latest service provision arrangements to ensure that the Council has sufficient information to prepare the financial statements in line with the planned closedown and audit timetable of April and May 2017 • We will carry out substantive testing of all items in the financial statements that are greater than the tolerable error level set out on page 5 to ensure the balances are accurate
<p>Appeals Provision for National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates)</p>	<p>Westminster City Council's provision for business rates appeals is the largest in the country and is a highly material balance in the financial statements. The provision is based on significant judgements made by management and uses a complex estimation technique to prepare the provision.</p>	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have kept up-to-date with how the appeals process is affecting Westminster City Council and any planned changes in the methodology used to calculate the provision. <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate • Testing of the calculation and agreement to supporting documentation • Review of the disclosures made by the Council in its financial statements

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.	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and walkthrough of controls. We have not identified any issues from the walkthrough test <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive sampling of payments throughout the year and year end creditors and testing for unrecorded liabilities
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration accruals are understated	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and walkthrough of controls. We have not identified any issues from the walkthrough test <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive sampling of payroll system to payslips and contractual records and reconciling the total pay per the payroll system to the general ledger
Valuation of property, plant and equipment	Property, plant and equipment activity not valid	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and walkthrough of controls. We have not identified any issues from the walkthrough test <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample testing of housing rents income and test the year end reconciliation between the housing rents account and the general ledger

"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)

Other risks	Description of risk	Audit procedures
<p>Changes to the presentation of local authority financial statements</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (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:

- Heritage assets
- Assets held for sale
- Cash and cash equivalents
- Trade and other receivables
- Borrowings and other liabilities (long and short term)
- Provisions
- Useable and unusable reserves
- 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
- Schools balances and transactions
- Officers' remuneration note
- Leases note
- Related party transactions note
- Capital expenditure and capital financing note
- Financial instruments note
- Housing Revenue Account and associated notes
- Collection Fund and associated notes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 shall carry out an initial risk assessment based on the NAO's auditor's guidance note (AGN03). In our initial risk assessment, we will consider:

- 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, including Ofsted
- 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 one significant risk as a result of our initial risk assessment which we are required to communicate to you. The risk and work we propose to address the risk is 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 include our conclusion in our auditor's report on your financial statements which we will give in line with the agreed timetable.

Value for money (continued)

We set out below the significant risk 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
<p>Significant capital projects The capital programme includes a number of key projects and investments, which are significant both in scale and financial terms. The Council recognised in 2015/16 that there was a weakness in arrangements and introduced a new business case process for all major schemes.</p>	<p>This links to the Council's arrangements for planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and using appropriate cost and performance information to support informed decision making.</p>	<p>We will review the project management and risk assurance framework established by the Council in respect of the more significant projects, to establish how the Council is identifying, managing and monitoring these risks. We will review any business cases that are near completion or approved by members by the end of the financial year.</p>

Other audit responsibilities

In addition to our responsibilities under the Code of Practice in relation to your financial statements and arrangements for economy, 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.

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:

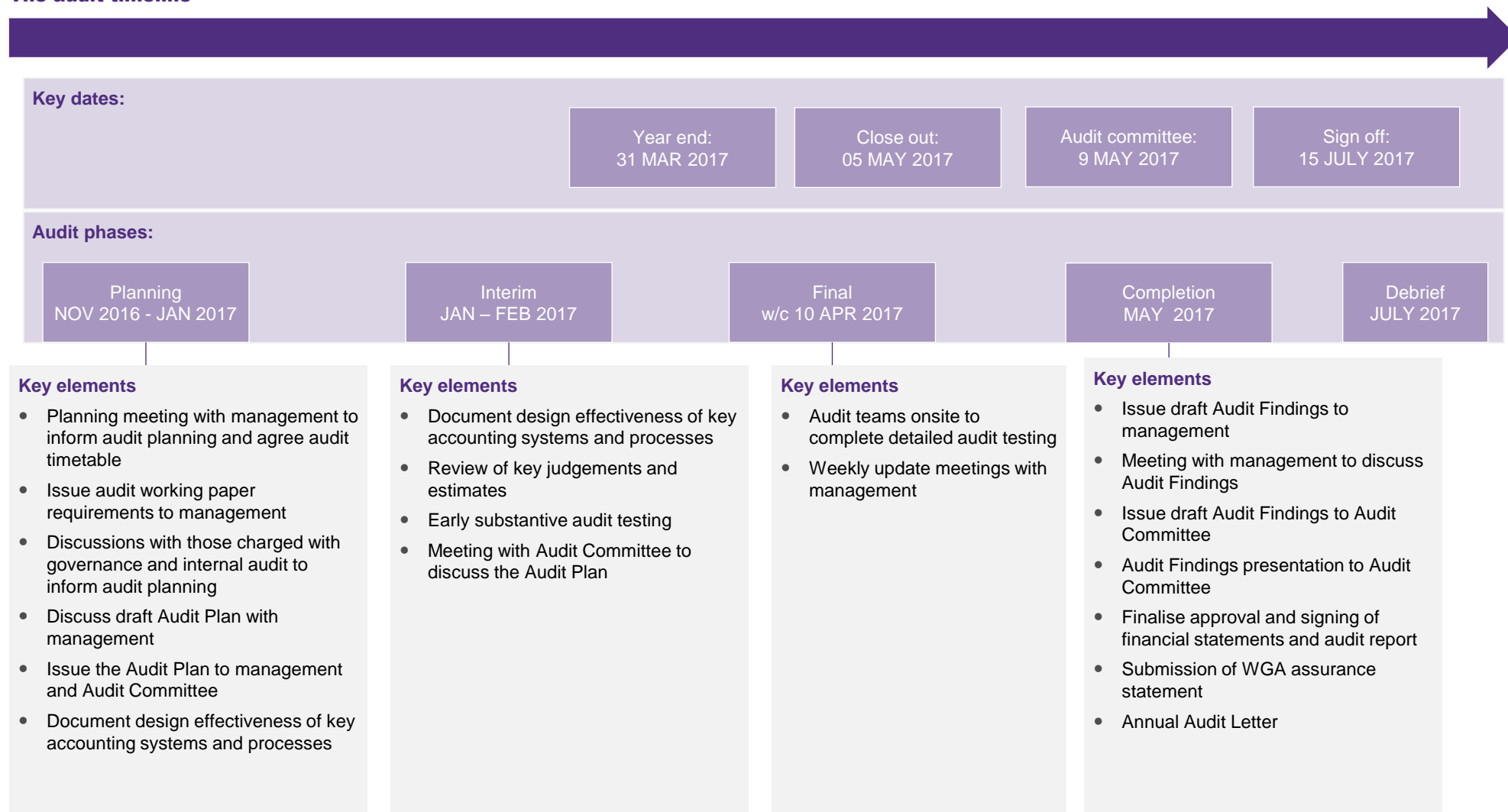
	Work performed	Conclusion
Internal audit	<p>We have completed a high level review of internal audit's overall arrangements. Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention.</p> <p>We have also reviewed internal audit's work on the Council's key financial systems to date. 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 Council and that internal audit work contributes to an effective internal control environment.</p> <p>Our review of internal audit work 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"> • Communication and enforcement of integrity and ethical values • Commitment to competence • Participation by those charged with governance • Management's philosophy and operating style • Organisational structure • Assignment of authority and responsibility • Human resource policies and practices 	<p>Our work has identified no material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Council's financial statements.</p>

Results of interim audit work (continued)

	Work performed	Conclusion
Walkthrough testing	<p>We have completed walkthrough tests of the Council's controls operating in areas where we consider that there is a risk of material misstatement to the financial statements.</p> <p>Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention. Internal controls have been implemented by the Council in accordance with our documented understanding.</p>	<p>Our work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.</p>
Journal entry controls	<p>We have reviewed the Council'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 Council's control environment or financial statements.</p> <p>To date we have undertaken detailed testing on journal transactions recorded for the first seven months of the financial year, by extracting material entries for further review. No issues have been identified that we wish to highlight for your attention.</p>	<p>Our work has not identified any weaknesses which in the Council's journal control environment. We will continue our detailed testing of journal transactions during the February and April audit visits.</p>

The audit cycle

The audit timeline



Audit Fees

Fees

	£
Council audit	185,719
Grant Certification	25,386
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	211,105

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
- Regular sector updates
- Ad-hoc telephone calls and queries
- Technical briefings and updates
- Regular contact to discuss strategy and other important areas

Independence and non-audit services

Ethical Standards and ISA (UK and Ireland) 260 require us to give you timely disclosure of matters relating to our independence.

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 Westminster City Council. 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		
Teachers pension return	3,500	Certification Report
Non-audit related		
CFO insights	9,500	Data analytics online tool

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.psa.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 CCG'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	✓	✓



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