

The Audit Plan for London Borough of Barnet

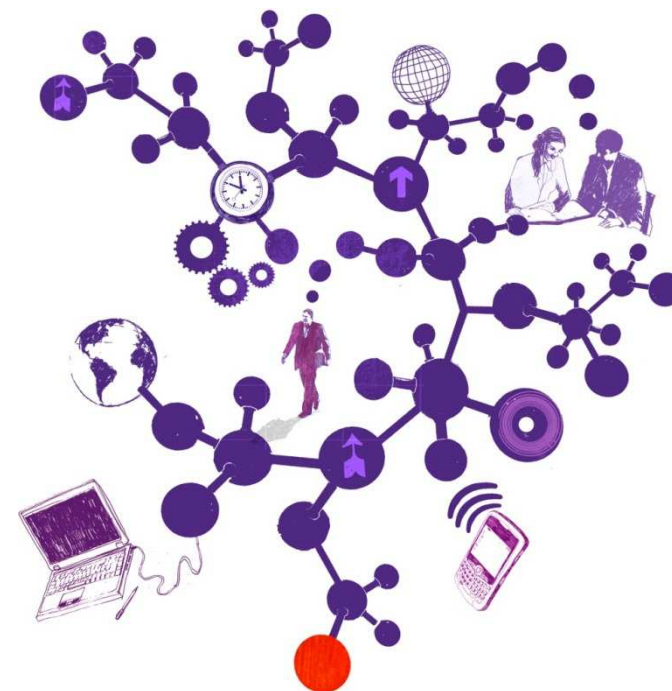
Year ended 31 March 2015

13 April 2015

Paul Hughes
Engagement Lead
T 020 7728 2256
E paul.hughes@uk.gt.com

Nick Taylor
Manager
T 01223 225514
E nick.taylor@uk.gt.com

Amelia Robinson
Audit In-Charge
E amelia.m.robinson@uk.gt.com



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 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 Council 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.

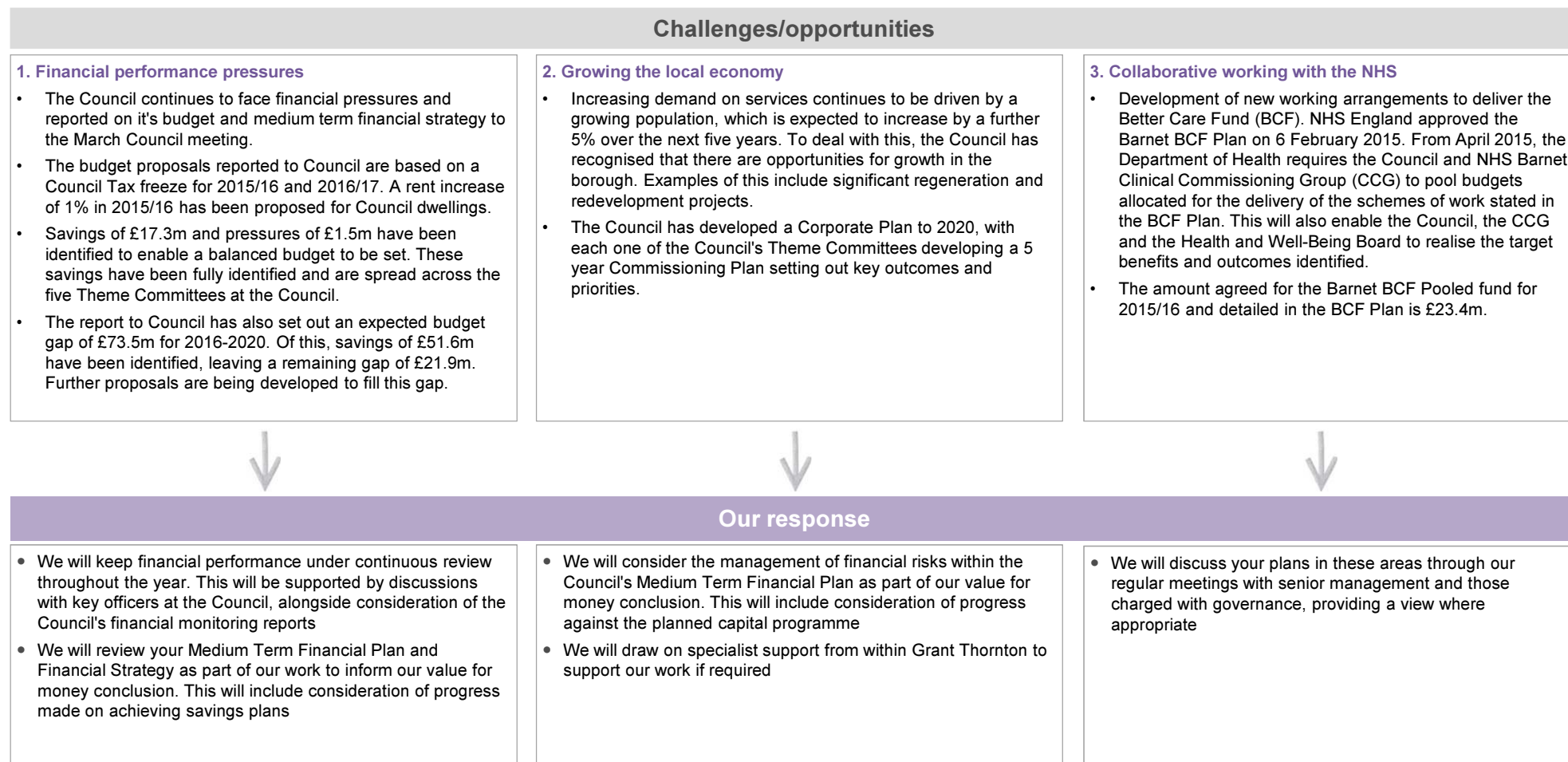
Contents

Section

1. Understanding your business
2. Developments relevant to your business and the audit
3. Our audit approach
4. An audit focused on risks
5. Significant risks identified
6. Other risks
7. Value for Money
8. Results of interim work
9. Key dates
10. Fees and independence
11. Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance

Understanding your business

In planning our audit we need to understand the challenges and opportunities the Council is facing. We set out a summary of our understanding below.



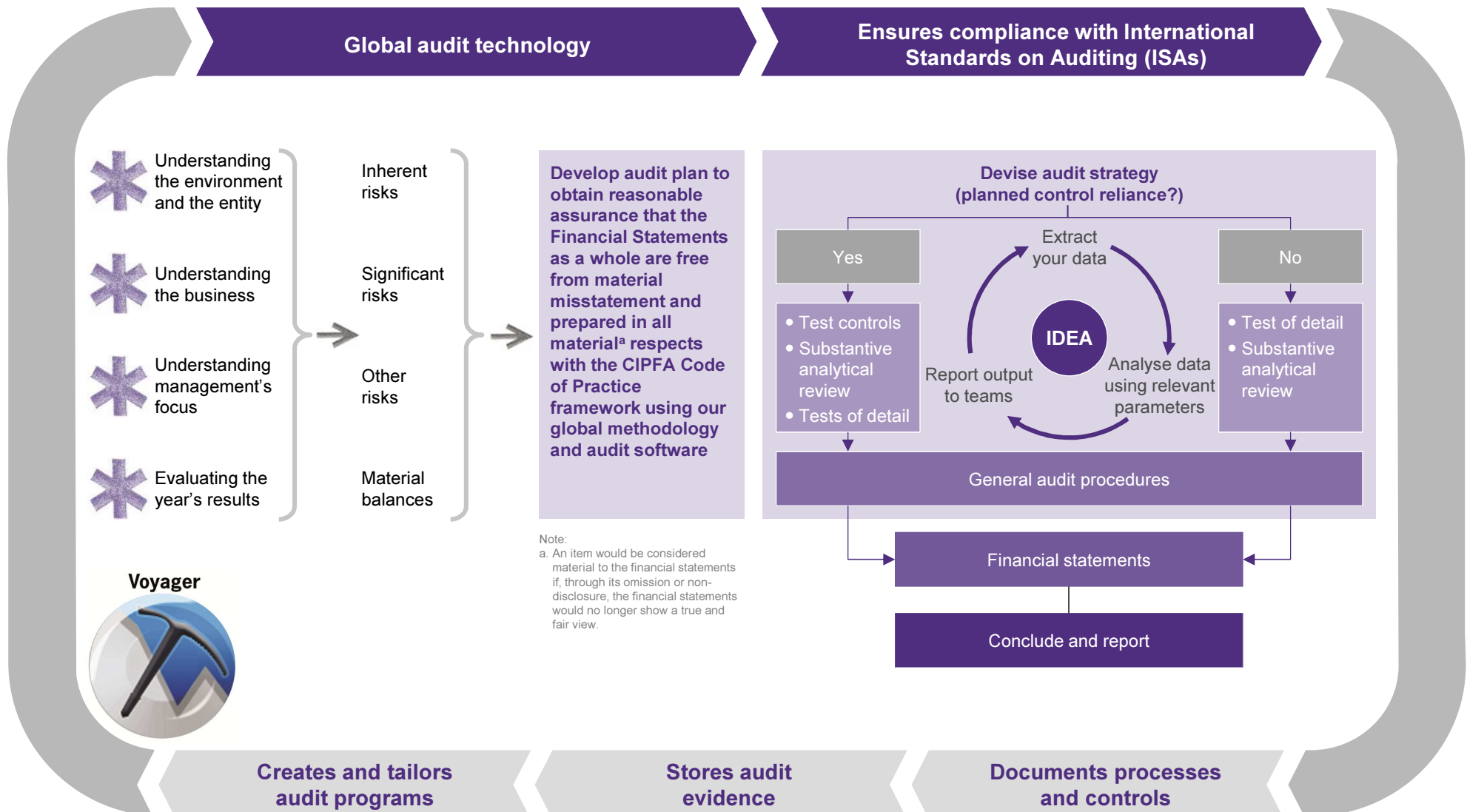
Developments relevant to your business and the audit

In planning our audit we also consider the impact of key developments in the sector and take account of national audit requirements as set out in the Code of Audit Practice ('the code') and associated guidance.

Developments and other requirements					
1. Financial reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the CIPFA Code of Practice Changes to the recognition of school land and buildings on local authority balance sheets Adoption of new group accounting standards (IFRS 10, 11 and 12) 	2. Legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Finance settlement 	3. Corporate governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Explanatory foreword 	4. Better Care Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better Care Fund (BCF) plans and the associated pooled budgets will be operational from 1 April 2015 	5. Financial Pressures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing service provision with less resource Progress against savings plans 	6. Other requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is required to submit a Whole of Government accounts pack on which we provide an audit opinion The Council completes grant claims and returns on which audit certification is required

Our response					
<p>We will ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Council complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice through discussions with management and our substantive testing schools are accounted for correctly and in line with the latest guidance the group boundary is recognised in accordance with the Code and joint arrangements are accounted for correctly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will discuss the impact of the legislative changes with the Council through our regular meetings with senior management and those charged with governance, providing a view where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review the arrangements the Council has in place for the production of the AGS We will review the AGS and the explanatory foreword to consider whether they are consistent with our knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will consider whether the BCF is a risk in the context of our VfM conclusion and will carry out further work if required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review the Council's performance against the 2014/15 budget, including consideration of performance against the savings plan We will undertake a review of Financial Resilience as part of our VfM conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will carry out work on the WGA pack in accordance with requirements We will certify the housing benefit subsidy claim in accordance with the requirements specified by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. This company will take over the Audit Commission's responsibilities for housing benefit grant certification from 1 April 2015.

Our audit approach



Significant risks identified

'Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, either due to 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 315).

In this section we outline the significant risks of material misstatement which we have identified. There are two presumed significant risks which are applicable to all audits under auditing standards (International Standards on Auditing – ISAs) which are listed below:

Significant risk	Description	Substantive audit procedures
The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions	<p>Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue</p> <p>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 London Borough of Barnet, 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 London Borough of Barnet, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable
Management over-ride of controls	<p>Under ISA 240 the presumption 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 journal controls and early discussion of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management• Testing of journal entries• Review of unusual significant transactions
Risk of new accounting system producing balances that are materially misstated	<p>As at 1 April 2014, the ledger system was migrated from SAP to Integra which is hosted by Capita. 2014/15 will be the first year that the Council accounts will be compiled on the new ledger system.</p>	<p>Document our understanding of the controls put in place by management over data migration.</p> <p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing the completeness of data migration to the new systems as part of our IT review• Complete walk through tests of the new ledger system <p>Work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of subsystem reconciliations

Other risks identified

The auditor should evaluate the design and determine the implementation of the entity's controls, including relevant control activities, over those risks for which, in the auditor's judgment, it is not possible or practicable to reduce the risks of material misstatement at the assertion level to an acceptably low level with audit evidence obtained only from substantive procedures (ISA 315).

In this section we outline the other risks of material misstatement which we have identified as a result of our planning.

Other risks	Description	Work completed to date	Further work planned
Operating expenses	Creditors related to core activities (e.g. supplies) understated or not recorded in the correct period (Operating expenses understated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We have performed a walkthrough to gain assurance that the in-year controls were operating in accordance with our understanding. No issues were identified as a result of this work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We will reconcile the subsidiary system interfaces and general ledger control accountsWe will complete unrecorded liabilities testing to confirm the completeness and cut-off of transactions
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration and benefit obligations and expenses understated (Remuneration expenses not correct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We have performed a walkthrough to gain assurance that the in-year controls were operating in accordance with our understanding. No issues were identified as a result of this work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We will reconcile the subsidiary system interfaces and general ledger control accountsWe will complete monthly trend analysis of payments recognisedWe will complete cut-off testing (both before and after the year end)
Welfare Expenditure	Welfare benefit expenditure improperly computed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We have performed a walkthrough to gain assurance that the in-year controls were operating in accordance with our understanding. No issues were identified as a result of this work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">We will reconcile the subsidiary system interfaces and general ledger control accountsWe will complete initial DWP certification testing of Housing Benefits, including analytical review and verification of benefits awarded on a sample basis

Value for money

Value for money

The Code requires us to issue a conclusion on 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.

Our VfM conclusion is based on the following criteria specified by the Audit Commission:

VfM criteria	Focus of the criteria
The organisation has proper arrangements in place for securing financial resilience	The organisation has robust systems and processes to manage financial risks and opportunities effectively, and to secure a stable financial position that enables it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future
The organisation has proper arrangements for challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness	The organisation is prioritising its resources within tighter budgets, for example by achieving cost reductions and by improving efficiency and productivity

We have undertaken a risk assessment to identify areas of risk to our VfM conclusion. We will undertake risk based work focussing on arrangements relating to financial governance, strategic financial planning and financial control.

Specifically we will:

- review and update our risk assessment agreed during our 2013/14 financial resilience review to reflect the up to date position on arrangements relating to key indicators of financial performance, financial governance, strategic financial planning and financial control
- consider any reports issued by key regulators (e.g. OFSTED) to ensure that potential impacts are suitably managed by the Council.

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.

Results of interim audit work

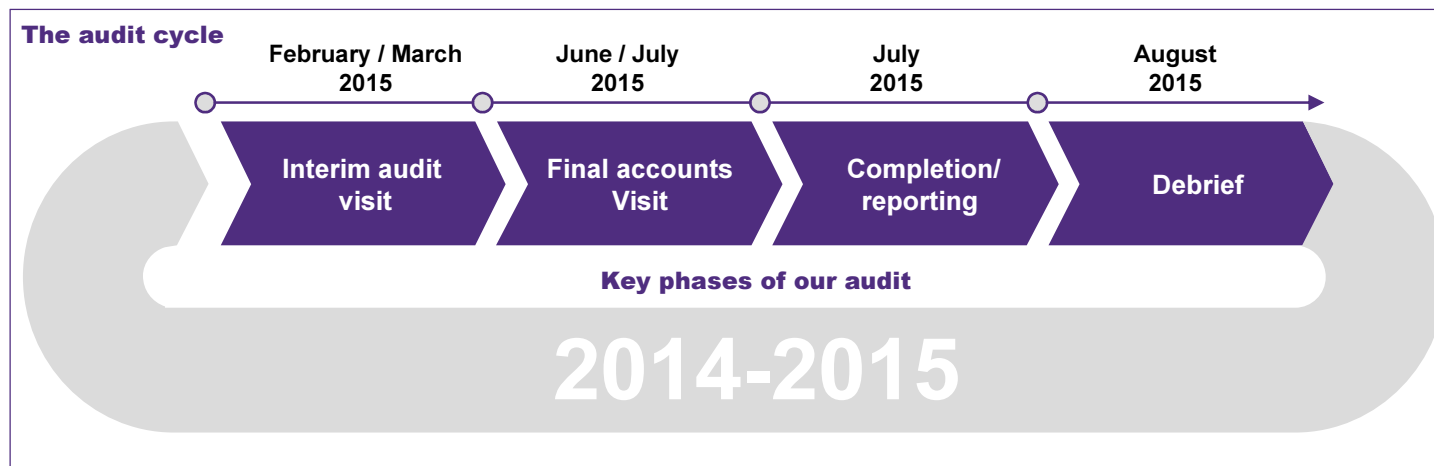
The findings of our interim audit work, and the impact of our findings on the accounts audit approach, are summarised in the table below:

	On-going work	Conclusion
Internal audit	<p>We are considering internal audit's overall arrangements against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Based on our work to date, we have not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention</p> <p>We 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>Based on our work to date, we consider that the internal audit service continues to provide an independent and satisfactory service to the Council and that internal audit work contributes to an effective internal control environment at the Council</p> <p>Our review of internal audit work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach</p>
Walkthrough testing	<p>We have completed walkthrough tests of 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 in accordance with our documented understanding</p>	<p>Our 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 cont'd

	Work performed	Conclusion
Review of information technology controls	Our information systems specialist is currently performing a high level review of the general IT control environment, as part of the overall review of the internal controls system. This includes a follow up of the issues that were raised last year	Work is on-going and any findings will be reported to the Audit Committee as part of our Audit Findings Report Annual Report to Those Charged With Governance).
Journal entry controls	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	No significant issues were identified from the review of journal policies and procedures We will gain assurance over the appropriateness of the journal transactions processed by reviewing individual entries which have been processed in the production of the financial statements as well as those used throughout the year
Group accounts	The Council has considered its approach to group accounts for 2014/15. Officers anticipate no material differences between the group accounts and the single entity accounts in 2014/15. In line with the prior year, the Council is proposing not to produce group accounts for the 2014/15 financial year	We will continue to consider the requirements for the production of group accounts, but are not minded to challenge the Council's approach at this time

Key dates



Date	Activity
January 2015	Planning
February / March 2015	Interim site visit
30 April 2015	Presentation of audit plan to Audit Committee
June / July 2015	Year end fieldwork
July 2015	Report audit findings to those charged with governance (Audit Committee)
July 2015	Sign financial statements opinion

Fees and independence

Fees

	£
Council audit	226,700
Grant certification	27,080
Total fees (excluding VAT)	253,780

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

Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
None	Nil

Independence and ethics

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 therefore we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

Full details of all fees charged for audit and non-audit services will be included in our Audit Findings report at the conclusion of the audit.

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

Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance

International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 260, as well as other ISAs, 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

This plan has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission (www.audit-commission.gov.uk).

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. 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 Audit Commission and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work. Our work considers the Council's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

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 issue 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		✓



© 2015 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights reserved.

'Grant Thornton' means Grant Thornton UK LLP, a limited liability partnership.

Grant Thornton is a member firm of Grant Thornton International Ltd (Grant Thornton International). References to 'Grant Thornton' are to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms operate and refer to one or more member firms, as the context requires.

Grant Thornton International and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered independently by member firms, which are not responsible for the services or activities of one another. Grant Thornton International does not provide services to clients.

grant-thornton.co.uk