

The Audit Plan for Warwick District Council

Year ended 31 March 2015

10 March 2015

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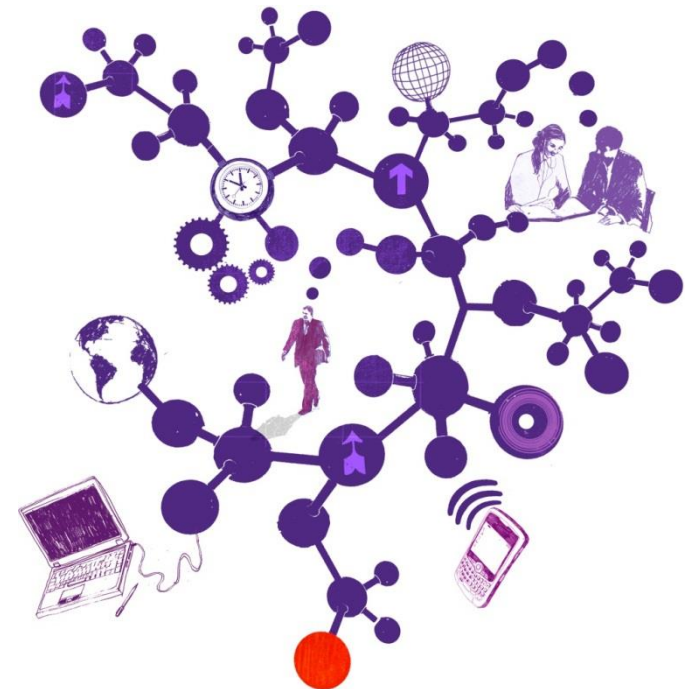
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Understanding your business

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.

Challenges/opportunities

1. Procurement and Commissioning

- Delivering efficiency savings through improved procurement.
- Many authorities are looking at making significant changes to the way services are delivered, which is requiring long term planning and up front commitment from both officers and members.

2. LG Reorganisation

- Regional devolution plans
- Combined authorities
- Confederations

3. LG Finance Settlement

- The local government spending settlement showed local authorities are facing a cash reduction in their spending power of 6% in 2015-16.
- Councils are being placed under continued pressure to produce savings on an on going basis.

4. Governance Arrangements

- Austerity, funding reductions and demographic pressures create a potential threat to the long-term sustainability of some organisations in the sector.
- In this context the task of maintaining good and effective governance is becoming ever more complex, and at the same time increasingly important.
- Governance needs to keep pace with these changes, ensuring that authorities' goals are achieved, and values maintained regardless of who is contracted to deliver the service.



Our response

- We will review the progress you have made in delivering your efficiency savings in this area as part of our work on your arrangements for financial resilience.

- We will discuss your plans in these areas through our regular meetings with senior management and those charged with governance, providing a view where appropriate.

- We will review your Medium Term Financial Plan and financial strategy as part of our work on your arrangements for financial resilience.

- We will discuss any planned changes to your governance structures through our regular meetings with senior management and those charged with governance, providing a view where appropriate.
- We will ensure that any governance recommendations arising from the review of the recent local government objections are properly considered.

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

- Changes to the CIPFA Code of Practice
- Adoption of new group accounting standards (IFRS 10,11 and 12)

2. Legislation

- Local Government Finance settlement

3. Corporate governance

- Annual Governance Statement (AGS)
- Explanatory foreword

5. Financial Pressures

- Managing service provision with less resource
- Progress against savings plans

6. Other requirements

- 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

We will ensure that

- the Council complies with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice through discussions with management and our substantive testing.
- the group boundary is recognised in accordance with the Code and joint arrangements are accounted for correctly.

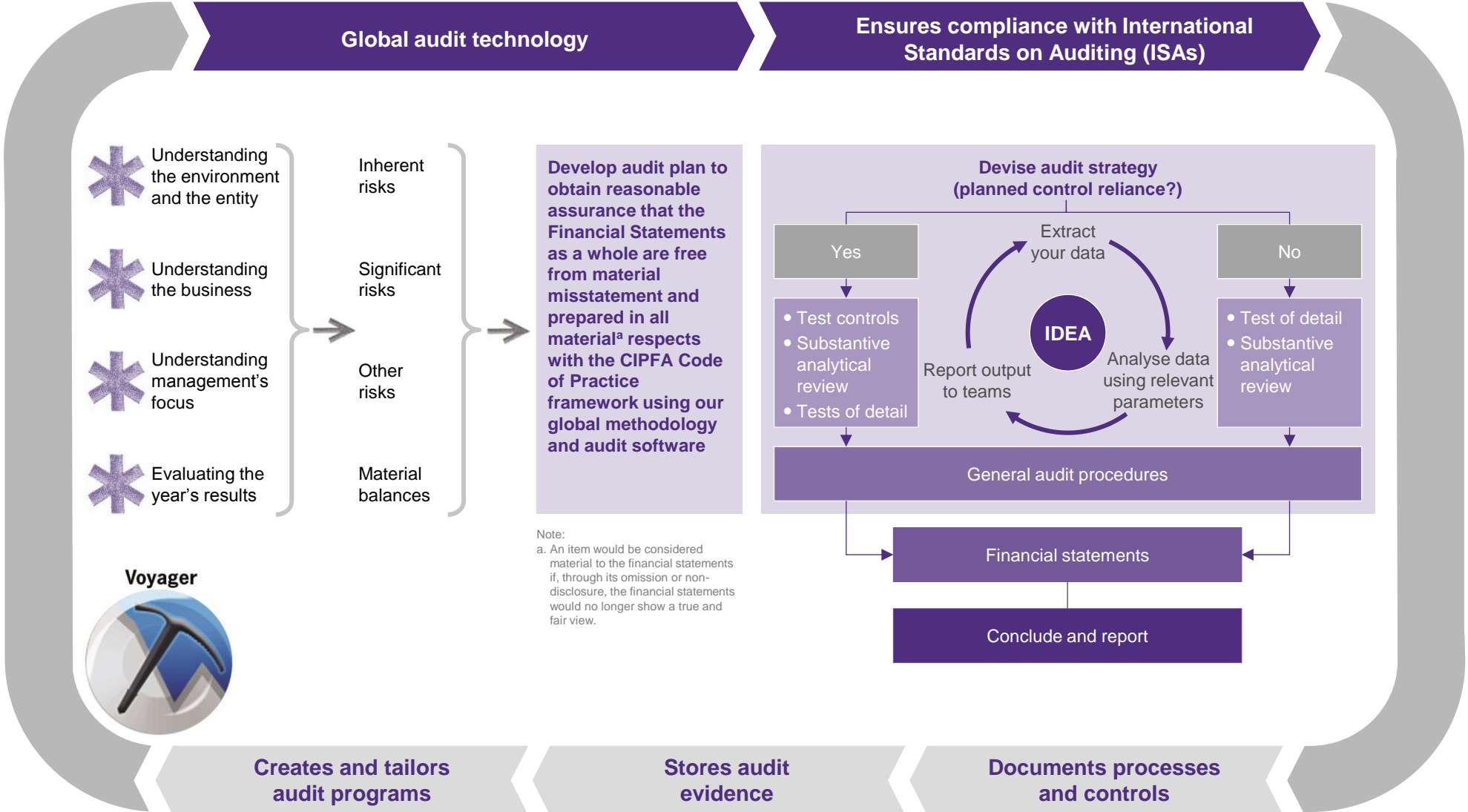
- We will discuss the impact of the legislative changes with the Council through our regular meetings with senior management and those charged with governance, providing a view where appropriate.

- 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.
- We will follow up the previous recommendation made on the AGS.

- 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.

- 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 Warwick District 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 Warwick District Council, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable.
Management over-ride of controls	Under ISA 240 the presumption that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the journal control environment. <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.

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	Audit Approach
Operating expenses	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period (Operating expenses understated)	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have updated our understanding and discussed the cycle with relevant personnel from the finance team during the interim audit. • We have performed walkthrough tests of the controls identified in the cycle. • Substantive testing of transactions up to the date of the interim audit. <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive testing will be performed on transactions made since the interim visit on our return at the final audit. • Cut off testing will be performed on pre and post year end transactions. • A review of the completeness of the reconciliations to the purchasing system will be undertaken.
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration accruals understated (Remuneration expenses not correct)	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have updated our understanding and discussed the cycle with relevant personnel from the finance team during the interim audit. • We have performed walkthrough tests of the controls identified in the cycle. • Substantive testing of transactions up to the date of the interim audit. <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive testing will be performed on transactions made since the interim visit on our return at the final audit. • A review of the completeness of the payroll reconciliation to ensure that the information from the payroll system can be agreed to the ledger and financial systems.

Other risks identified

Other risks	Description	Audit Approach
Welfare Expenditure	Welfare benefit expenditure improperly computed	<p>Work completed to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have updated our understanding and discussed the cycle with relevant personnel in the Revenue and Benefits team during the interim audit.• We performed walkthrough tests of the controls identified in the cycle. <p>Further work planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substantive testing is performed via the HBCOUNT work which provides assurances over the balances in the financial statements.• Review of key reconciliations are performed between the Revenues and Benefits systems and the ledger.

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 work in the following areas to address the risks identified:

- Perform a risk assessment and then consider the areas for further review which will support our overall conclusion. We will then update members on the key areas reviewed, and
- Undertake a financial resilience review

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 agree any additional reporting to the Council on a review-by-review basis.

Results of interim audit work

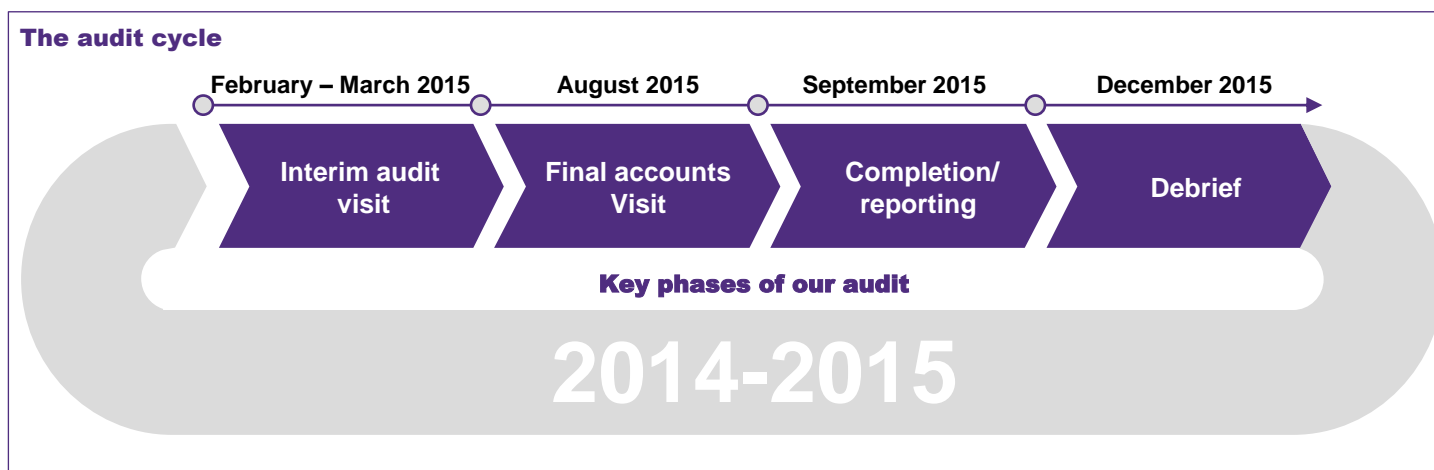
The findings of our interim audit work, and the impact of our findings on the accounts audit approach, are summarised in the table below:

	Work performed and findings	Conclusion
Internal audit	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.	Our review of internal audit work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.
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>Internal controls have been implemented in accordance with our documented understanding, with the exception of the issue noted.</p>	<p>Our work has identified one issue which we wish to bring to your attention. The walkthrough of the bank reconciliation process identified that although the reconciliations were being carried out on a timely basis, these were not been signed off by the reviewer as being completed and accurately followed up.</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 	Our work has identified no material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Council's financial statements

Results of interim audit work cont'd

	Work performed	Conclusion
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 issues have been identified that we wish to highlight for your attention.

Key dates



Date	Activity
February 2015	Planning
March 2015	Interim site visit
March 2015	Presentation of audit plan to Audit Committee
August 2015	Year end fieldwork
September 2015	Audit findings clearance meeting with Head of Finance
September 2015	Report audit findings to those charged with governance
September 2015	Sign financial statements opinion

Fees and independence

Fees

	£
Council audit	71,497
Grant certification	8,530
Total fees (excluding VAT)	80,027

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

Grant certification

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

Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
None	Nil

Fees for other services

Fees for other services 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.

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.

	Audit plan	Audit findings
Our communication plan		
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		✓



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