



## **Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board**

Planning report to the Board on the audit for the year ending 31 March 2020

Issued 17 February 2020 for the meeting on 3 March 2020

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# Introduction

## The key messages in this report

Audit quality is our number one priority. We plan our audit to focus on audit quality and have set the following audit quality objectives for this audit:

- A robust challenge of the key judgements taken in the preparation of the financial statements.
- A strong understanding of your internal control environment.
- A well planned and delivered audit that raises findings early with those charged with governance.

I have pleasure in presenting our planning report to the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (“the Board”) for the year ending 31 March 2020 audit. I would like to draw your attention to the key messages of this audit plan:

### **Audit Plan**

We have updated our understanding of the Board including discussion with management and review of relevant documentation from across the Board. Based on these procedures, we have developed this plan in collaboration with the Board to ensure that we provide an effective audit service that meets your expectations and focuses on the most significant areas of importance and risk to the Board.

### **Key Risks**

We have taken an initial view as to the significant audit risks the Board faces. These are presented as a summary dashboard on page 11.

### **Audit Dimensions**

The Code of Audit Practice sets out four audit dimensions which set a common framework for all public sector audits in Scotland. These are financial sustainability, financial management, governance and transparency and value for money.

In line with previous years, we have concluded that the full application of the wider scope is not appropriate and applied the “small body” clause set out in the Code which allows narrower scope work to be carried out.

Transactions are generally routine in nature and most funding is from East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, and South Ayrshire Council. Per the latest Revenue Outturn Position for period 8, the Board has a gross expenditure budget of £2,531k mainly comprising payroll costs, £1,934k. We have updated our risk assessment which included consideration of the Board’s risk registers and work both carried out and planned by internal audit and have concluded that the “small body” exemption is still appropriate. We will consult with the Board to confirm agreement on this conclusion.

Our work in this area will therefore be restricted to concluding on:

- the appropriateness of the disclosures in the governance statement; and
- the financial sustainability of the Board and the services that it delivers over the medium to longer term.

Should any further risks emerge during the year, we will provide an update to the Board.

# Introduction (continued)

## The key messages in this report (continued)

### **Our Commitment to Quality**

We are committed to providing the highest quality audit, with input from our market leading specialists, sophisticated data analytics and our wealth of experience.

### **Adding value**

Our aim is to add value to the Board through our audit work by being constructive and forward looking, by identifying areas of improvement and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In this way, we aim to help the Board promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making and more effective use of resources.

We have also shared our recent research, informed perspectives and best practice from our work across the wider public sector on pages 25 to 28 of this paper.

**Pat Kenny**  
**Audit director**

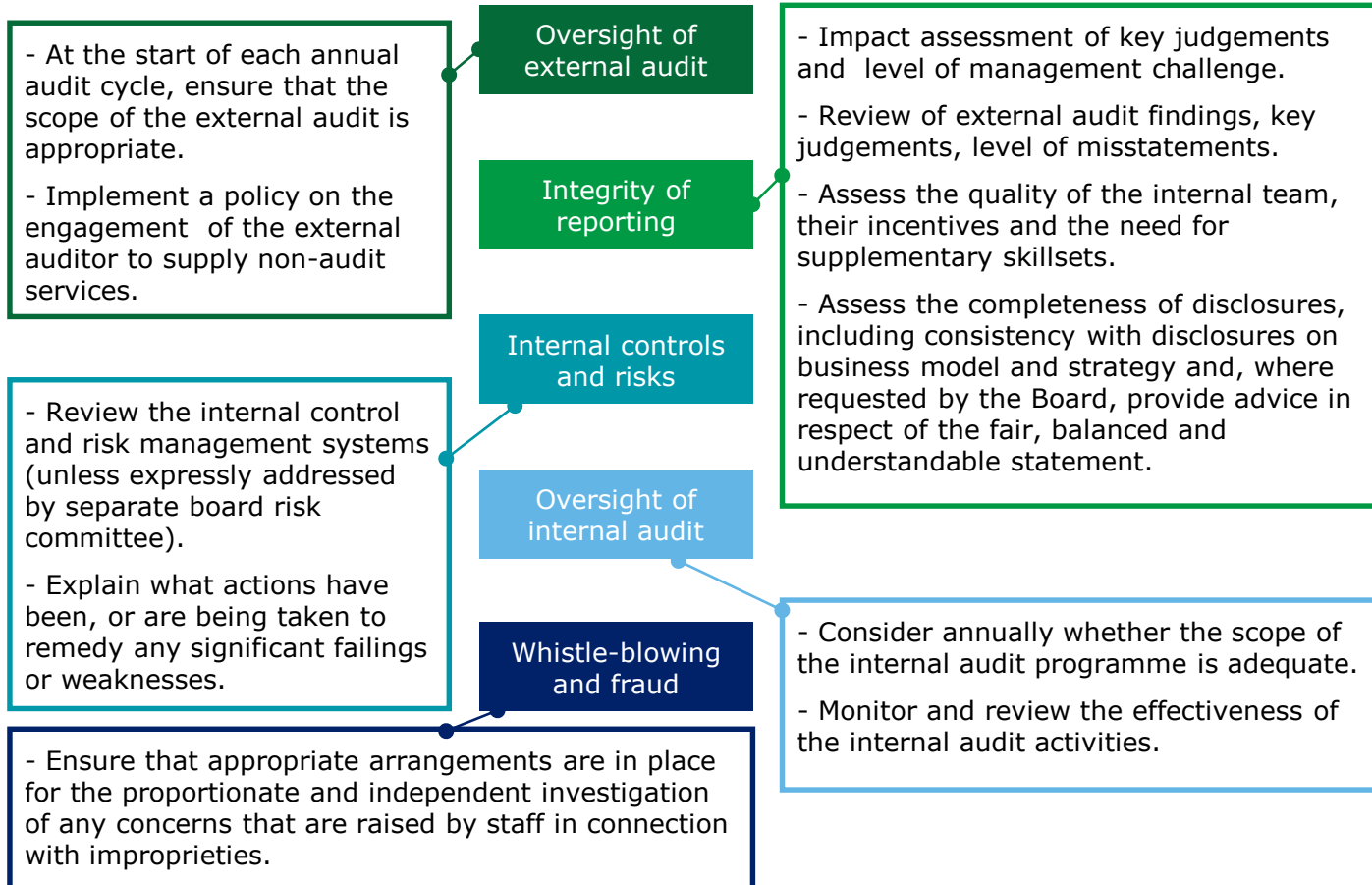
# Responsibilities of the Board

## Helping you fulfil your responsibilities

Why do we interact with the Board?



As a result of regulatory change in recent years, the role of the Audit Committee, which is part of the role of the Board has significantly expanded. We set out here a summary of the core areas of Board responsibility to provide a reference in respect of these broader responsibilities and highlight throughout the document where there is key information which helps the Board in fulfilling its remit.



# Our audit explained

## We tailor our audit to your Board and your strategy

### Identify changes in your body and environment

The Board continues to face significant financial pressures with additional responsibilities anticipated from the Barclay Review, as well as reduced funding as a result of Individual Electoral Reform (IER) funding expected to end 31 March 2020.

### Scoping

Our scope is in line with the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Audit Scotland.  
More detail is given on page 9.

### In our final report

In our final report to you we will conclude on the significant risks identified in this paper and report to you our other findings.



### Determine materiality

We will use a materiality level of £39k (2018/19: £36k) in planning our audit. This is based on forecasted gross expenditure, consistent with the basis used in the prior year. We will report to you any misstatements above £2k (2018/19: £2k).  
Further details on our materiality considerations are provided on page 8.

### Significant risk assessment

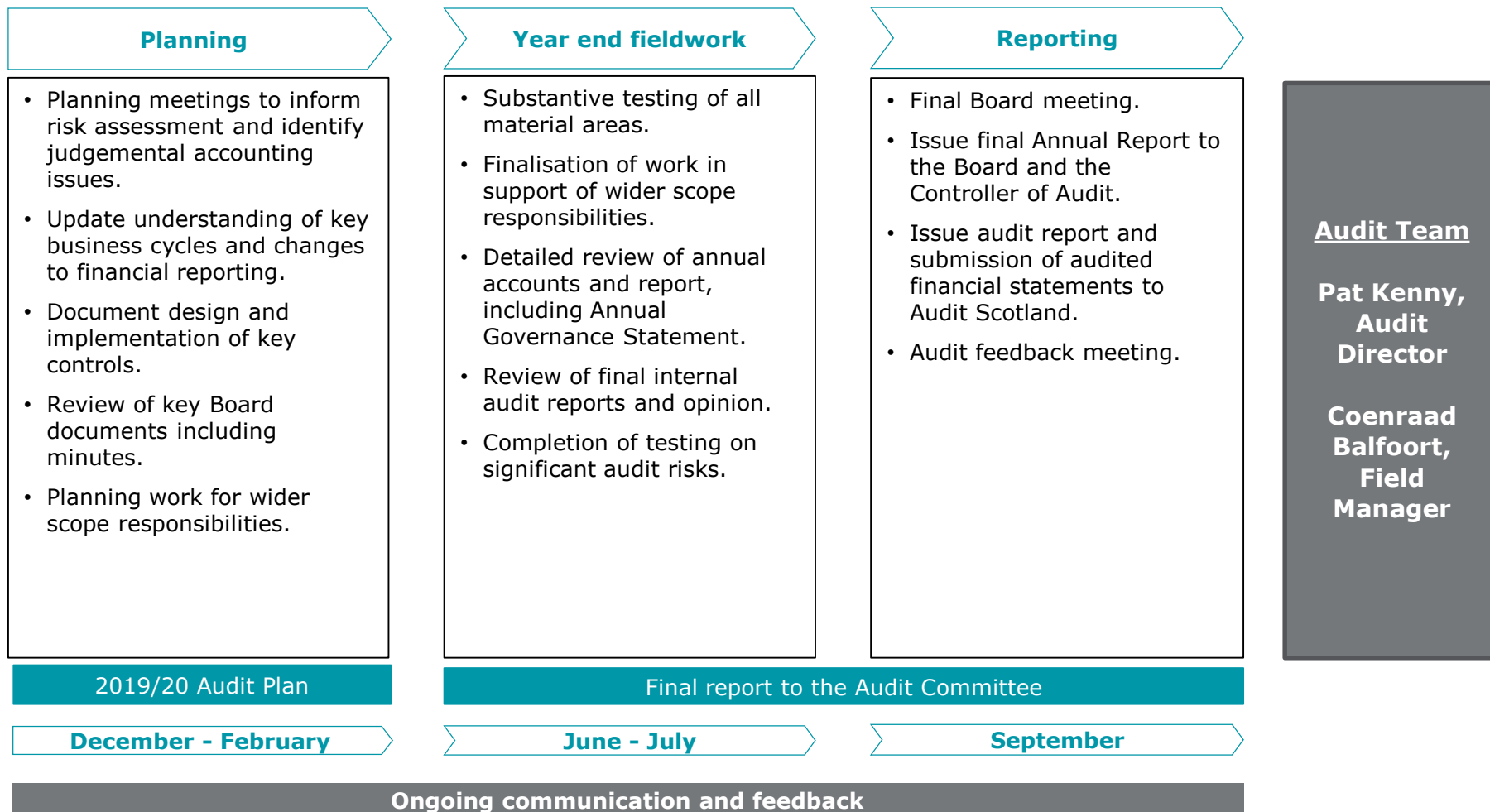
We have identified significant audit risks in relation to the Board. More detail is given on pages 11 to 13. These are consistent with our prior year audit.

### Quality and Independence

We confirm all Deloitte network firms and engagement team members are independent of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board. We take our independence and the quality of the audit work we perform very seriously. Audit quality is our number one priority.

# Continuous communication and reporting

## Planned timing of the audit



# Materiality

## Our approach to materiality

### Basis of our materiality benchmark

- The audit director has determined materiality as £39k (2018/19: £36k) and performance materiality as £31k (2018/19: £27k) based on professional judgement and risk factors specific to the Board, the requirement of auditing standards and the financial measures most relevant to users of the financial statements.
- We have used 1.6% (2018/19: 1.6%) of forecasted gross expenditure as the benchmark for determining materiality and applied 80% as performance materiality.
- This approach is consistent with our prior year materiality calculation.

### Reporting to those charged with governance

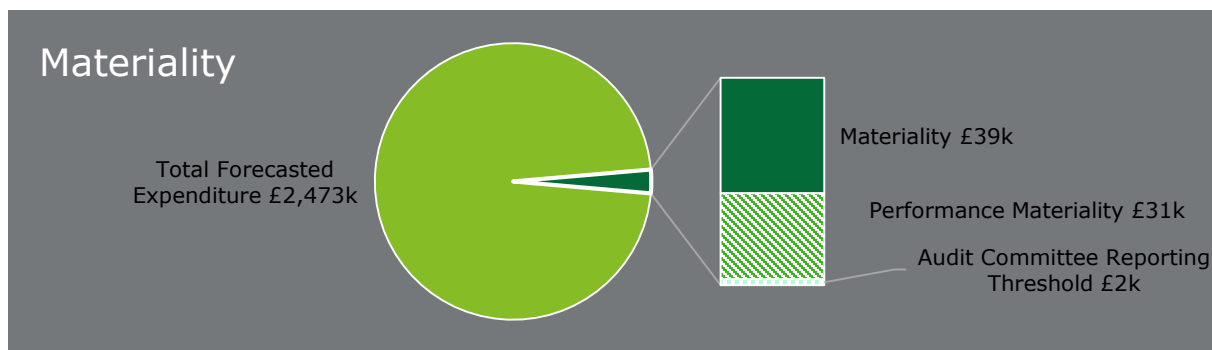
- We will report to you all misstatements found in excess of our clearly trivial threshold which is £2k (2018/19: £2k).
- We will report to you misstatements below this threshold if we consider them to be material by nature.

is consistent with Audit Scotland guidance which states that the threshold for clearly trivial above which we should accumulate misstatements for reporting and correction to audit committees must not exceed £250k.

### Our annual audit report

We will:

- Report the materiality benchmark applied in the audit of the Board;
- provide comparative data and explain any changes in materiality, compared to prior year, if appropriate; and
- explain any normalised or adjusted benchmarks we use, if appropriate.



Although materiality is the judgement of the audit director, the Board must satisfy themselves that the level of materiality chosen is appropriate for the scope of the audit.





# Scope of work and approach

## Our key areas of responsibility under the Code of Audit Practice

Core audit work	Planned output	Timeline
Perform an audit of the annual accounts and express specified audit opinion	Annual audit plan	3 March 2020
	Independent auditor's report	September 2020
Consider and report on the audit dimensions	Annual audit plan	3 March 2020
	Annual audit report	September 2020
Share audit intelligence with Audit Scotland including highlighting potential statutory reports	Current issues returns	17 January 2020
		20 March 2020
		7 August 2020
		23 October 2020
Provide information on cases of fraud	Fraud Returns	30 November 2019
		28 February 2020
		31 May 2020
		30 August 2020

# Scope of work and approach (continued)

## Our approach

### Liaison with internal audit

The Auditing Standards Board's version of ISA (UK) 610 "Using the work of internal auditors" prohibits use of internal audit to provide "direct assistance" to the audit. Our approach to the use of the work of Internal Audit has been designed to be compatible with these requirements.

We will review their reports and meet with them to discuss their work. We will discuss the work plan for internal audit, and where they have identified specific material deficiencies in the control environment we consider adjusting our testing so that the audit risk is covered by our work.

Using these discussions to inform our risk assessment, we can work together with internal audit to develop an approach that avoids inefficiencies and overlaps, therefore avoiding any unnecessary duplication of audit requirements on the Board staff.

### Approach to controls testing

Our risk assessment procedures will include obtaining an understanding of controls considered to be 'relevant to the audit'. This involves evaluating the design of the controls and determining whether they have been implemented ("D&I").

The results of our work in obtaining an understanding of controls will be collated and the impact on the extent of substantive audit testing required will be considered.

### Promoting high quality reporting to stakeholders

We view the audit role as going beyond reactively checking compliance with requirements: we seek to provide advice on evolving good practice to promote high quality reporting.

We will utilise the Code of practice on local authority accounts in the UK disclosure checklist to support the Board in preparing high quality drafts of the annual report and financial statements, which we would recommend the Board complete during drafting.

The Disclosure Checklist reflects the cutting clutter agenda and includes a "not material" column. We would encourage the Board to exclude disclosure if the information is not material.

Audit Scotland has published good practice guides in relation the Annual Report and the Governance Statement to support the Board in preparing high quality drafts of the Annual Report and financial statements, which we would recommend the Board consider during drafting.

### Statutory Other Information

In addition to the financial statements, we are required to consider whether the Management Commentary and Governance Statement is consistent with the financial statements and has been prepared in accordance with applicable requirements. In performing this work, we will refer to the Financial Reporting Council report issued in December 2018 following an audit quality thematic review of auditors' work on other information which identified a number of instances when insufficient work was performed to ensure that good practice is followed.

Obtain an understanding of the Board and its environment including the identification of relevant controls.







Identify risks and controls that address those risks.

Carry out "design and implementation" work on relevant controls.

If considered necessary, test the operating effectiveness of selected controls

Design and perform a combination of substantive analytical procedures and tests of details that are most responsive to the assessed risks.

# Significant risks Dashboard

Risk	Material?	Fraud risk identified?	Planned approach to controls testing	Level of management judgement	Page no.
Occurrence of income			Design and implementation		12
Management override of controls			Design and implementation		13



Some degree of management judgement



Limited management judgement

# Significant risks (continued)

## Risk 1 – Occurrence of income

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**Risk identified**

ISA 240 states that when identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement due to fraud, the auditor shall, based on a presumption that there are risks of fraud in income recognition, evaluate which types of income, income transactions or assertions give rise to such risks.

The main components of income for the Board are requisitions from all three of the Ayrshire Councils: South Ayrshire Council ('SAC'), North Ayrshire Council ('NAC'), and East Ayrshire Council ('EAC'). The significant risk is pinpointed to the recognition of this income, being occurrence of income received from the Councils given the reliance of the Board on this income and the potential that funding partners may not provide additional income to cover overspends.

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**Our response** We will perform the following:

- test the income to ensure that the correct contributions have been input and received in accordance with that agreed as part of budget process and that any reductions have been appropriately applied;
  - test the reconciliations performed by the Board at 31 March 2020 to confirm all income is correctly recorded in the ledger;
  - confirm that the reconciliations performed during 2019/20 have been reviewed on a regular basis; and
  - assess the design and implementation of the controls around recognition of income.
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# Significant risks (continued)

## Risk 2 – Management override of controls

We will use computer assisted audit techniques, including Spotlight, to support our work on the risk of management override

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**Risk identified**

In accordance with ISA 240 (UK) management override is a significant risk. This risk area includes the potential for management to use their judgement to influence the financial statements as well as the potential to override the Board's controls for specific transactions.

The key judgments in the financial statements are those which we have selected to be the significant audit risks around occurrence of income. This is inherently the areas in which management has the potential to use their judgment to influence the financial statements.

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**Planned audit challenge**

In considering the risk of management override, we plan to perform the following audit procedures that directly address this risk:

**Journal testing**

- We will test the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing.
- Using our Spotlight data analytics tool, we will risk assess journals and select items for detailed follow up testing. The journal entries will be selected using computer-assisted profiling based on areas which we consider to be of increased interest.
- We will test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger, and other adjustments made in the preparation of financial reporting.

**Accounting estimates and judgements**

- We will test the design and implementation of controls over key accounting estimates and judgements.
- We will review accounting estimates for biases that could result in material misstatements due to fraud. This will include both a retrospective review of 31 March 2019 estimates and a review of the corresponding estimates as at 31 March 2020.

**Significant and unusual transactions**

- We will obtain an understanding of the business rationale of significant transactions that we become aware of that are outside of the normal course of business for the Board, or that otherwise appear to be unusual, given our understanding of the Board and its environment.

# Other areas of focus

## Expenditure recognition

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### **Risk identified**

In accordance with Practice Note 10 (*Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom*), in addition to the presumed risk of fraud in revenue recognition set out in ISA (UK) 240, as discussed further on page 12, auditors of public sector bodies should also consider the risk of fraud and error on expenditure. This is on the basis that most public bodies are net spending bodies, therefore the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to expenditure may be greater than the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to revenue recognition.

We have considered this risk for the Board and concluded that we are satisfied that the control environment is strong and there is no history of errors or audit adjustments. This has therefore not been assessed as a significant risk area, but will continue to be an area of audit focus in line with Practice Note 10.

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### **Planned audit challenge**

We will perform the following procedures to address the above risk:

- perform focused testing of accruals and prepayments made at the year end; and
- performing focused cut-off testing of invoices received and paid around the year end.

# Wider scope requirements

## Audit dimensions

The Code of Audit Practice sets out four audit dimensions which set a common framework for all public sector audits in Scotland. These are financial sustainability, financial management, governance and transparency and value for money. As explained on page 3, in line with previous years, we have concluded that the full application of the wider scope is not appropriate and applied the “small body” clause set out in the Code which allows narrower scope work to be carried out.

Audit dimension	Areas to be considered	Impact on the 2019/20 Audit
<p>The appropriateness of the disclosures in the <b>governance statement</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The completeness of the disclosures in meeting the requirements of the guidance note issued by CIPFA <i>Delivering good governance in local government: framework 2016</i>.</li> <li>Inconsistencies between the disclosures or between the disclosures and audit knowledge.</li> </ul>	<p>We will review the draft governance statement and assess whether there are any inconsistencies or omissions based on other audit evidence obtained throughout the audit.</p> <p><b>Audit Risk:</b> The governance statement is not consistent with the wider direction of the accounts or compliant with the CIPFA guidance note.</p>
<p><b>Financial sustainability</b> looks forward to the medium and longer term to consider whether the body is planning effectively to continue to deliver its services or the way in which they should be delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The financial planning systems in place across the shorter and longer terms.</li> <li>The arrangements to address any identified funding gaps.</li> <li>The affordability and effectiveness of funding and investment decisions made.</li> <li>Workforce planning</li> </ul>	<p>We will review the Board’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to ensure that it includes a capital plan, scenario planning and sensitivity analysis. There should be clear links to the Scottish Government MTFs and the Board’s strategy and outcomes.</p> <p>We will also review plans for ensuring sustainable reserve levels going forward.</p> <p><b>Audit Risk:</b> There is a risk that the Board cannot effectively plan for the medium to longer term if they do not know how to prioritise resources based on their corporate plan and outcomes, and how any potential funding gaps are to be met.</p>

# Maintaining audit quality

## Responding to challenges in the current audit market

This is a time of intense scrutiny for our profession with questions over the role of auditors, market choice and the provision of non-audit services by an audit firm. We welcome the debate and are engaging fully with all parties who have an interest in the current audit market reform initiatives, so that our profession, our people, our clients and most importantly, the public interest, are served to the highest standards of audit quality and independence.

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### The role of audit

- Public confidence in audit has weakened over recent years and the expectation gap has widened with differences between what an audit does and what people think it should do (largely in areas of internal controls, fraud, front half assurance and long term viability).
- Deloitte fully supports an independent review into the role of auditors.
- The Government's Brydon Review will consider UK audit standards and how audits should evolve.

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### Would it be better to have audit only firms?

- Deloitte believes that multidisciplinary firms have more knowledge, greater access to technology and a deeper talent pool. The specialist input from industry, valuation, controls, pensions, cyber, solvency, IT and tax services are critical to an effective audit.
- Our investment in audit innovation, training and technology is greater because of the multidisciplinary model.

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### Is the current audit market uncompetitive?

- We recognise that the competition for large, complex clients is fierce, but we wholeheartedly support greater choice being available to stakeholders.
- There are barriers to entry in the listed market that are significant including the required global reach, unlimited liability, and the high cost of tendering.
- The audit profession has engaged with the Competition and Markets Authority with ideas on how to provide greater choice in the market, and responded to the CMA's suggested market remedies.

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### Independence and conflicts from other services

- Legislation and the FRC's Ethical Standard restrict the services we may provide to audit clients
- Deloitte invests heavily in systems, processes and people to check for potential conflicts.
- We have governance arrangements in place to assess any areas of potential conflict, including where required to protect the public interest.
- Fees for non-audit services to audit clients have fallen since 2008 (17% to 7.3% of firm revenue).

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### Deloitte

- Our Impact Report and Transparency Report are available on our website <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/about-deloitte-uk/articles/annual-reports.html>



# Maintaining audit quality (continued)

## Our commitment to audit quality



Our objective is to deliver a distinctive, quality audit to you. Every member of the engagement team will contribute, to achieve the highest standard of professional excellence.

In particular, for your audit, we consider that the following steps will contribute to the overall quality:

- We will apply professional scepticism on material issues and significant judgements identified, by using our expertise in the local government sector and elsewhere to provide robust challenge to management.
- We have obtained a deep understanding of your business, its environment and of your processes in income and expenditure recognition, payroll expenditure and capital expenditure enabling us to develop a risk-focused approach tailored to the Board.
- Our engagement team is selected to ensure that we have the right subject matter expertise and industry knowledge. We will involve specialists to support the audit team in our work.

In order to deliver a quality audit to you, each member of the core audit team will receive tailored learning to develop their expertise in audit skills, delivered by Pat Kenny and other sector experts. This includes sector specific matters, and audit methodology updates.



### **Engagement Quality Control Review**

We have developed a tailored Engagement Quality Control approach. Our dedicated Professional Standards Review (PSR) function will provide a 'hot' review before any audit or other opinion is signed. PSR is operationally independent of the audit team, and supports our high standards of professional scepticism and audit quality by providing a rigorous independent challenge.

# Purpose of our report and responsibility statement

## Our report is designed to help you meet your governance duties

### What we report

Our report is designed to establish our respective responsibilities in relation to the financial statements audit, to agree our audit plan and to take the opportunity to ask you questions at the planning stage of our audit. Our report includes:

- Our audit plan, including key audit judgements and the planned scope;
- Key regulatory and corporate governance updates, relevant to you.

### What we don't report

As you will be aware, our audit is not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the Board.

Also, there will be further information you need to discharge your governance responsibilities, such as matters reported on by management or by other specialist advisers.

Finally, the views on internal controls and business risk assessment in our final report should not be taken as comprehensive or as an opinion on effectiveness since they will be based solely on the audit procedures performed in the audit of the financial statements and the other procedures performed in fulfilling our audit plan.

### Other relevant communications

We will update you if there are any significant changes to the audit plan.

This report has been prepared for the Board, as a body, and we therefore accept responsibility to you alone for its contents. We accept no duty, responsibility or liability to any other parties, since this report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. Except where required by law or regulation, it should not be made available to any other parties without our prior written consent.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our report with you and receive your feedback.



**Pat Kenny, CPFA**

for and on behalf of Deloitte LLP

Glasgow

17 February 2020

# Appendices



# Fraud responsibilities and representations

## Responsibilities explained



### Your Responsibilities:

The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management and those charged with governance, including establishing and maintaining internal controls over the reliability of financial reporting, effectiveness and efficiency of operations and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



### Our responsibilities:

- We are required to obtain representations from your management regarding internal controls, assessment of risk and any known or suspected fraud or misstatement.
- As auditors, we obtain reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.
- As set out in the significant risks section of this document, we have identified the risk of fraud in the occurrence of income and management override of controls as a key audit risk for your organisation.



### Fraud Characteristics:

- Misstatements in the financial statements can arise from either fraud or error. The distinguishing factor between fraud and error is whether the underlying action that results in the misstatement of the financial statements is intentional or unintentional.
- Two types of intentional misstatements are relevant to us as auditors – misstatements resulting from fraudulent financial reporting and misstatements resulting from misappropriation of assets.

### We will request the following to be stated in the representation letter signed on behalf of the Board:

- We acknowledge our responsibilities for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.
- We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- We are not aware of any fraud or suspected fraud that affects the entity and involves:
  - (i) management;
  - (ii) employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
  - (iii) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.



# Fraud responsibilities and representations

## Inquiries

We will make the following inquiries regarding fraud:



### **Management:**

- Management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud, including the nature, extent and frequency of such assessments.
- Management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity.
- Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity.
- Management's communication, if any, to employees regarding its views on business practices and ethical behaviour.
- Whether management has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.
- We plan to involve management from outside the finance function in our inquiries.

### **Internal audit and Local Counter Fraud Specialist**



- Whether internal audit and the Board's local counter fraud specialist has knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity, and to obtain its views about the risks of fraud.

### **Those charged with governance**



- How those charged with governance exercise oversight of management's processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the entity and the internal control that management has established to mitigate these risks.
- Whether those charged with governance have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity.
- The views of those charged with governance on the most significant fraud risk factors affecting the entity.



# Independence and fees



As part of our obligations under International Standards on Auditing (UK), we are required to report to you on the matters listed below:

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**Independence confirmation** We confirm the audit engagement team, and others in the firm as appropriate, Deloitte LLP and, where applicable, all Deloitte network firms are independent of the Board and will reconfirm our independence and objectivity to the Board for the year ending 31 March 2020 in our final report to the Board.

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**Fees** The audit fee for 2019/20, in line with the fee range provided by Audit Scotland, is £7,450 as analysed below:

Auditor remuneration	£ 6,430
Audit Scotland fixed charges:	
Pooled costs	630
Performance Audit and Best Value	0
Audit support costs	390
<b>Total proposed fee</b>	<b>7,450</b>

There are no non-audit services fees proposed for the period.

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**Non-audit services** In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Board's policy for the supply of non-audit services or any apparent breach of that policy. We continue to review our independence and ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place including, but not limited to, the rotation of senior partners and professional staff and the involvement of additional partners and professional staff to carry out reviews of the work performed and to otherwise advise as necessary.

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**Relationships** We have no other relationships with the Board, its directors, senior managers and affiliates, and have not supplied any services to other known connected parties.

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# Our approach to quality

## AQR team report and findings

We maintain a relentless focus on quality and our quality control procedures and continue to invest in and enhance our Audit Quality Monitoring and Measuring programme. In July 2019 the Financial Reporting Council ("FRC") issued individual reports on each of the seven largest firms, including Deloitte, on Audit Quality Inspections providing a summary of the findings of its Audit Quality Review ("AQR") team for the 2018/19 cycle of reviews.

We greatly value the FRC reviews of our audit engagements and firm wide quality control systems, a key aspect of evaluating our audit quality. We have further transformed our internal review processes including a new focus for reviewing in progress audits, developing our Audit Quality Indicators ('AQI') which are monitored and reported to the firm's executive, and on enhanced remediation procedures.

Whilst we are pleased that overall our quality record, as measured by external inspections, has improved from 76% to 84%, we remain committed to continuous improvement and achieving as a minimum the 90% benchmark across all engagements. We are however, extremely disappointed one engagement received a rating of significant improvements required during the period. This is viewed very seriously within Deloitte and we have worked with the AQR to agree a comprehensive set of swift and significant firm wide actions. We are also pleased to see the impact of our previous actions on impairment, group audits and contingent liability disclosures reflected in the audits under review and there being limited or no findings in those areas. These continue to be a focus in our training, internal coaching and internal review programmes.

We invest continually in our firm wide processes and controls, which we seek to develop globally, to underpin consistency in delivering high quality audits whilst ensuring engagement teams exercise professional scepticism through robust challenge.

All the AQR public reports are available on its website. <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditors/audit-quality-review/audit-firm-specific-reports>

### The AQR's 2018/19 Audit Quality Inspection Report on Deloitte LLP

"We assessed 84% of the firm's audits that we reviewed as requiring no more than limited improvements, compared with 76% in 2017/18. Of the FTSE 350 audits we reviewed this year, we assessed 75% as achieving this standard compared with 79% in 2017/18. We note that our inspection results show only modest improvements in audit quality."

"We had no significant findings arising from our firm-wide work on internal quality monitoring, engagement quality control reviews and independence and ethics."

#### **"Our key individual review findings related principally to the need to:**

- Exercise greater professional scepticism in the audit of potential prior year adjustments and related disclosures in the annual report and accounts.
- Strengthen the extent of challenge of key estimates and assumptions in key areas of judgement, including asset valuations and impairment testing.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of the firm's audit of revenue.
- Achieve greater consistency in the audit of provisions and liabilities."

#### **"The firm has enhanced its policies and procedures during the year in a number of areas, including the following:**

- Through the firm's global audit quality programmes, there has been an increased focus on consistency of audit work across the audit practice. For certain account balances, standardised approaches have been adopted, further use has been made of centres of excellence and delivery centres and new technologies embedded into the audit process to support and enable risk assessments, analytical procedures and project management activities.
- Further methodology updates and additional guidance and training for the audit practice covering group audits, accounting estimates, financial services (including the adoption of IFRS 9) provisions and contingencies and the evidencing of quality control procedures (including EQCR) on individual audits.
- Increased support for audit teams throughout the audit cycle including coaching programmes for teams and greater use of diagnostics to monitor progress.
- Continued focus on the approach to the testing of internal controls. The firm provided additional training and support to audit teams adopting a controls-based audit approach, increased focus on reporting to Audit Committees on internal controls and on the wording of auditor's reports."

# Sector developments





# Accounting standards

## IFRS 16 - Leases

### Background

The new standard is being implemented in 2020/21 and will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases.

For 2019/20, the Board will need to include disclosures on the expected impact of the standard, but not make any adjustments in the financial statements in respect of IFRS 16. However, many organisations have identified previously unidentified leases (or arrangements that contain a lease, such as service contracts) as part of their transition project, and so there may be some 2019/20 impact.

Separate to the financial reporting impact, but potentially more critical, budgets for 2020/21, particularly capital budgets, will need to reflect the impact of the new standard (and require submissions well ahead of year-end).

In the local government context relatively small effects from standards can have a significant impact against performance metrics and targets, and so it is important to clearly understand the impact of the standards.

We have requested management's timetable for IFRS 16 work, and to understand the extent of testing required for 2019/20 disclosures.

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### Next steps

We recommend that the Board review the impact of IFRS 16 early in the year, including calculating any adjustments that will be required as at 31 March 2020 for transition. We would suggest that the Board receive reporting in year from management on the implementation of the new standard, and we will report specifically on the findings from our audit work in this area.

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# State of the State

## The view from citizens, leaders and the frontline of public services

### Background and overview

Now in its eighth year, The State of the State brings together Deloitte and Reform to make an annual assessment of government and public services in the UK. As Brexit negotiations and parliamentary wrangling continues, The State of the State looks beyond the headlines to explore the UK's public sector from the view of citizens, public sector leaders and the frontline of public services.

The State of the State finds that the public want greater spending on services and perceptions of social inequality have grown. It finds that investment in skills could make a significant difference to some of the UK's pervasive economic issues including productivity and regional disparity. And it finds frontline public sector professionals are too often hampered by out-of-date technology and working environments.

But amid these challenges, The State of the State finds much to be positive about. Our research shows that public sector leaders are enthused by the prospect of increased spending, public support is strong for government action on big issues like climate change and the thriving public sector ethos at the frontline remains one of the UK's core strengths.



### The State of the State 2019-20

The view from citizens, leaders and the frontline of public services

### Next steps

A summary of the key conclusions are provided on the next page. The full report is available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/thestateofthestate>

# State of the State (continued)

## The view from citizens, leaders and the frontline of public services

### Key conclusions

Combining the three perspectives in our research offers real insight into issues at the heart of a new domestic agenda. Our key observations are:

- **The public and the public sector want to know what post-austerity looks like.** Public service leaders are best placed to make their own devolved decisions, but many want direction from national governments on the shape of post-austerity, sector-wide reform. At the frontline, professionals want that reform to include greater use of mobile technology to reduce their administrative burden and boost their productivity.
- **Infrastructure and skills investment should be deployed to tackle economic inequalities.** The public think that economic inequalities in the UK are getting worse and public sector leaders believe transport infrastructure investment could tackle them if deployed with purpose. Our research also suggests that a range of the UK's economic and social challenges converge around skills – and so investment in skills provision could make a substantial difference to the UK's post-Brexit future.
- **The UK has an opportunity to consolidate its environmental leadership.** Public concerns on climate change have spiked in the past year, support for government intervention is strong and the UK has a window of opportunity to consolidate its environmental leadership when Glasgow plays host to the COP26 summit in 2020.
- **Resolving the social care crisis needs political will.** As the Queen's Speech recognised, underfunding in the social care system continues to blight lives and exacerbate demand on the NHS. Leaders across the public services want to see social care rise as a political priority and our survey finds it may be emerging as a priority for the public. Our research suggests that cross-party political leadership may be the best route to new funding arrangements – perhaps considering systems around the world as a starting point for UK options.
- **The UK could set the global gold standard in public administration.** Brexit may be dominating a substantial part of Civil Service capacity, but it has enhanced government capability and stimulated cross-departmental working. Leaving the EU is an era-defining challenge for government departments but beyond Brexit, the UK will be in a strong position to set the global gold standard for public administration, exporting UK expertise, experience of successful transformation and digital know-how.

# What does climate change mean for business?

## New website – learning, interviews and resources

### Background

Climate change is likely to drive some of the most profound changes to businesses in our lifetimes.

Impacts on products and services, supply chains, loss of asset values and market dislocation are already being caused by more frequent and severe climate-related events.

Discover how to think through the challenges and futureproof your business.

**The time to act is now!**

**Deloitte.**

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 ICAEW

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### What does climate change mean for business?

Understanding the role of finance professionals

Climate change is likely to drive some of the most profound changes to businesses in our lifetimes.

Impacts on products and services, supply chains, loss of asset values and market dislocation are already being caused by more frequent and severe climate-related events. These effects are now compounded by the accelerating pace of policy and regulatory change as humanity recognises the challenge we face and the drastic and rapid actions we all must take in order to protect our planet and our own livelihoods.

Discover how to think through the challenges and futureproof your business through [learning](#), [interviews](#) and [resources](#).

The time to act is now!

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### Next steps

Deloitte and the ICAEW have launched a site to support considering what climate change means for finance professionals at [www.deloitte.co.uk/climatechange](http://www.deloitte.co.uk/climatechange)



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