



# External Audit Plan 2017/18

East Sussex County Council

February 2018

## Financial Statement Audit

There are no significant changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (“the Code”) in 2017/18, which provides stability. Deadlines for producing and signing the accounts have advanced. The Authority successfully advanced its accounts production previously and as such we do not feel that this represents a significant risk, although it is still critically important. To meet the revised deadlines it is essential that the draft financial statements and all ‘prepared by client’ documentation is available in line with agreed timetables. Where this is not achieved there is a significant likelihood that the audit report will not be issued by 31 July 2018.

### Authority significant risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error have been identified as:

- **Valuation of land and buildings:** Whilst the Authority operates a cyclical revaluation approach, the Code requires that all land and buildings be held at fair value. We will consider the way in which the Authority ensures that assets not subject to in-year revaluation are not materially misstated;
- **Pension liabilities:** The valuation of the Authority’s pension liability, as calculated by the Actuary, is dependent upon both the accuracy and completeness of the data provided and the assumptions adopted. We will review the processes to ensure accuracy of data provided to the Actuary and consider the assumptions used in determining the valuation; and

## Value for Money Audit

Our risk assessment regarding your arrangements to secure value for money has not identified any significant risks.

## Other information

### Logistics and team

Our team is led by Joanne Lees, Director and Charlotte Goodrich, Senior Manager.

Our work will be completed in four phases from February to July and our key deliverables are this Audit Plan, and a Report to Those Charged With Governance.

### Fees

Our fee for the 2017/18 audit is £85,372 (£85,372 2016/2017). This is in line with the scale fees published by PSAA.

### Acknowledgement

We thank officers and Members for their continuing help and cooperation throughout our audit.

# Content

The contacts at KPMG in connection with this report are:

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## Headlines

1. Introduction
2. Financial statements audit planning
3. Value for money arrangements work
4. Other matters

## Appendices

- 1: Key elements of our financial statements audit approach
- 2: Independence and objectivity requirements
- 3: Quality framework

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This report is addressed to East Sussex County Council (the Authority) and has been prepared for the sole use of the Authority. We take no responsibility to any member of staff acting in their individual capacities, or to third parties. PSAA issued a document entitled Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies summarising where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from audited bodies. We draw your attention to this document which is available on PSAA's website ([www.psaa.co.uk](http://www.psaa.co.uk)).

External auditors do not act as a substitute for the audited body's own responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that public business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any part of KPMG's work, in the first instance you should contact Joanne Lees, the engagement lead to the Authority, who will try to resolve your complaint. If you are dissatisfied with your response please contact the national lead partner for all of KPMG's work under our contract with Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, Andrew Sayers (0207 694 8981, [andrew.sayers@kpmg.co.uk](mailto:andrew.sayers@kpmg.co.uk)). After this, if you are still dissatisfied with how your complaint has been handled you can access PSAA's complaints procedure by emailing [generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@psaa.co.uk), by telephoning 020 7072 7445 or by writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited, 3rd Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3H.

# 1. Introduction

## Background and statutory responsibilities

This plan supplements our 2017/18 audit fee letter 2017/18 dated April 2017, which set out details of our appointment by PSAA.

Our statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the NAO's Code of Audit Practice and the PSAA Statement of Responsibilities.

Our audit has two key objectives, requiring us to audit / review and report on your:

- **Authority and Pension Fund Financial statements:** Providing an opinion on your accounts. We also review the Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report and report by exception on these; and
- **Use of resources:** Concluding on the arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion).

The audit planning process and risk assessment is an on-going process and the assessment and fees in this plan will be kept under review and updated if necessary. Any change to our identified risks will be reporting to the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services.

## Financial statements audit

Our financial statements audit follows a four stage process:

- Financial statements audit planning
- Control evaluation
- Substantive procedures
- Completion

Appendix 1 provides more detail on these stages. This plan concentrates on the Financial Statements Audit Planning stage.

## Value for Money

Our Value for Money (VFM) arrangements workflow follows a five stage process:

- Risk assessment
- Links with other audit work
- Identification of significant VFM risks
- Review work (by ourselves and other bodies)
- Conclude
- Report

Page 7 provides more detail on these stages. This plan concentrates on explaining the VFM approach for 2017/18.

# 2. Financial statements audit planning

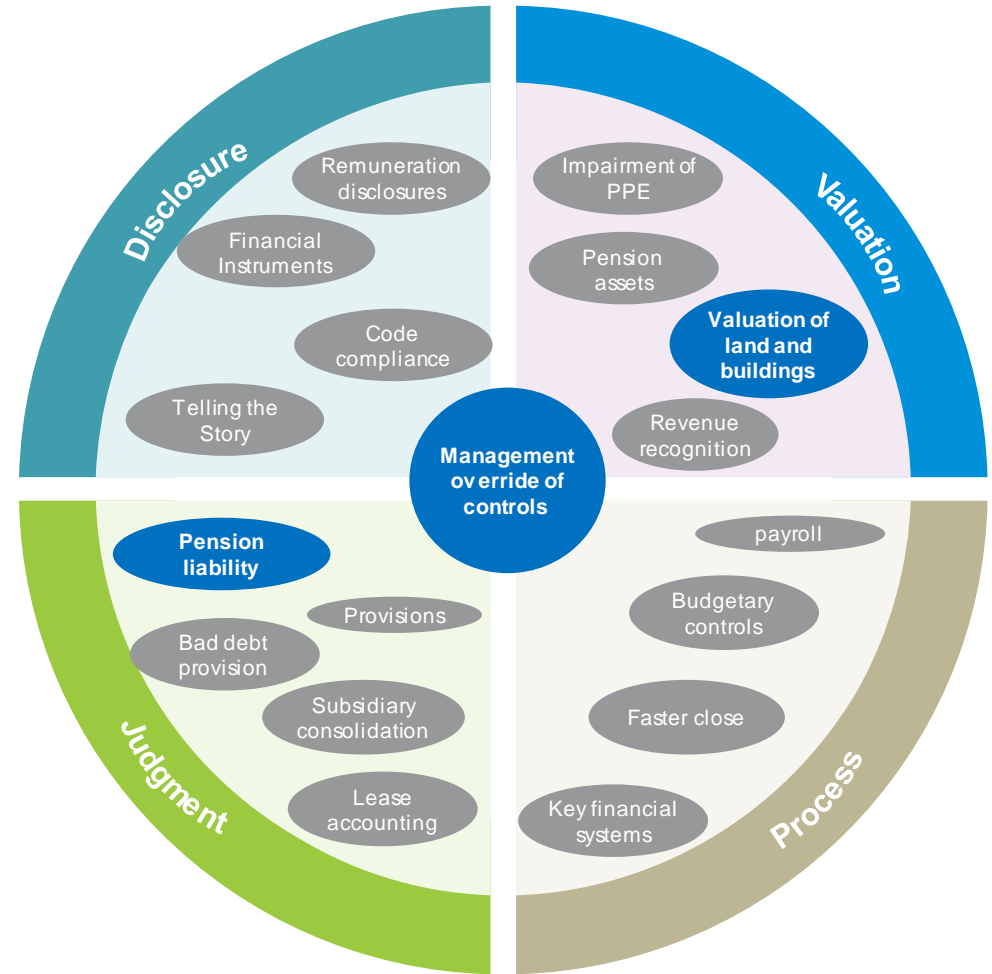
## Financial statements audit planning

Our planning work takes place December to January 2018 and involves: determining materiality; risk assessment; identification of significant risks; consideration of potential fraud risks; identification of key account balances and related assertions, estimates and disclosures; consideration of Management's use or experts; and issuing this plan to communicate our audit strategy.

## Authority risk assessment

Professional standards require us to consider two standard risks. We are not elaborating on these standard risks in this plan but consider them as a matter of course and will include any findings arising from our work in our ISA 260 Report.

- **Management override of controls:** Management is typically in a powerful position to perpetrate fraud owing to its ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Our audit incorporates the risk of Management override as a default significant risk. In line with our methodology, we carry out appropriate controls testing and substantive procedures, including over journal entries, accounting estimates and significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business, or are otherwise unusual.
- **Fraudulent revenue recognition:** We do not consider this to be a significant risk for local authorities as there are limited incentives and opportunities to manipulate the way income is recognised. We therefore rebut this risk and do not incorporate specific work into our audit plan in this area over and above our standard fraud procedures.



## 2. Financial statements audit planning

### Authority significant audit risks

Those risks requiring specific audit attention and procedures to address the likelihood of a material financial statement error in relation to the Authority.

#### Valuation of land and buildings

**Risk:** The Code requires that where assets are subject to revaluation, their year end carrying value should reflect the appropriate fair value at that date. The Authority has adopted a rolling revaluation model which sees land and buildings revalued over a three year cycle. As a result individual assets may not be revalued for two years. This creates a risk that the carrying value of those assets not revalued in year differs materially from the year end fair value.

**Approach:** We will review the approach that the Authority has adopted to assess the risk that assets not subject to valuation are materially misstated and consider the robustness of that approach. We will assess the risk of the valuation changing materially in year. We will consider movement in market indices between revaluation dates and the year end in order to determine whether these indicate that fair values have moved materially over that time.

In relation to those assets which have been revalued during the year we will assess the valuer's qualifications, objectivity and independence to carry out such valuations and review the methodology used (including testing the underlying data and assumptions).

#### Pension liabilities

**Risk:** The net pension liability represents a material element of the Authority's balance sheet. The Authority is the Administering Authority of the East Sussex County Council Pension Fund, which had its last triennial valuation completed as at 31 March 2016. This forms an integral basis of the valuation as at 31 March 2018. Valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme relies on assumptions, most notably actuarial assumptions, and actuarial methodology which results in the Authority's overall valuation.

There are financial assumptions and demographic assumptions used in the calculation of the Authority's valuation, such as the discount rate, inflation rates, mortality rates etc. Assumptions should reflect the profile of the Authority's employees and should be based on appropriate data. The basis of the assumptions is derived on a consistent basis year to year, or updated to reflect any changes. There is a risk that the assumptions and methodology used in the valuation of the Authority's pension obligation are not reasonable. This could have a material impact to net pension liability accounted for in the financial statements.

**Approach:** We will review controls that the Authority has in place over the information sent directly to the Scheme Actuary. We are also the auditors of the Pension Fund and will gain an understanding of the effectiveness of controls operated by the Pension Fund. This will include consideration of the process and controls with respect to the assumptions used in the valuation. We will evaluate the competency, objectivity and independence of the Actuary.

We will review the appropriateness of key assumptions in the valuation, compare them to expected ranges, and consider the need to make use of a KPMG actuary. We will review the methodology applied in the valuation by the Actuary. In addition, we will review the overall Actuarial valuation and consider the disclosure implications in the financial statements.

## 2. Financial statements audit planning

### Materiality

We are required to plan our audit to determine with reasonable confidence whether or not the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An omission or misstatement is regarded as material if it would reasonably influence the user of financial statements. This therefore involves an assessment of the qualitative and quantitative nature of omissions and misstatements. Generally, we would not consider differences in opinion in respect of areas of judgement to represent 'misstatements' unless the application of that judgement results in a financial amount falling outside of a range which we consider to be acceptable.

For the Authority materiality for planning purposes has been set at £9.9M which equates to 1% of 2016/17 Authority expenditure.

### Reporting to Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services

Whilst our audit procedures are designed to identify misstatements which are material to our opinion on the financial statements as a whole, we nevertheless report to the Audit Committee any unadjusted misstatements of lesser amounts to the extent that these are identified by our audit work.

Under ISA 260(UK&I) 'Communication with those charged with governance', we are obliged to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are 'clearly trivial' to those charged with governance.

ISA 260 (UK&I) defines 'clearly trivial' as matters that are clearly inconsequential, whether taken individually or in aggregate and whether judged by any quantitative or qualitative criteria.

In the context of the Authority we propose that an individual difference could normally be considered to be clearly trivial if it is less than £495K.

If Management has corrected material misstatements identified during the audit, we will consider whether those corrections should be communicated to Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services to assist it in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.

# 3. Value for money arrangements work

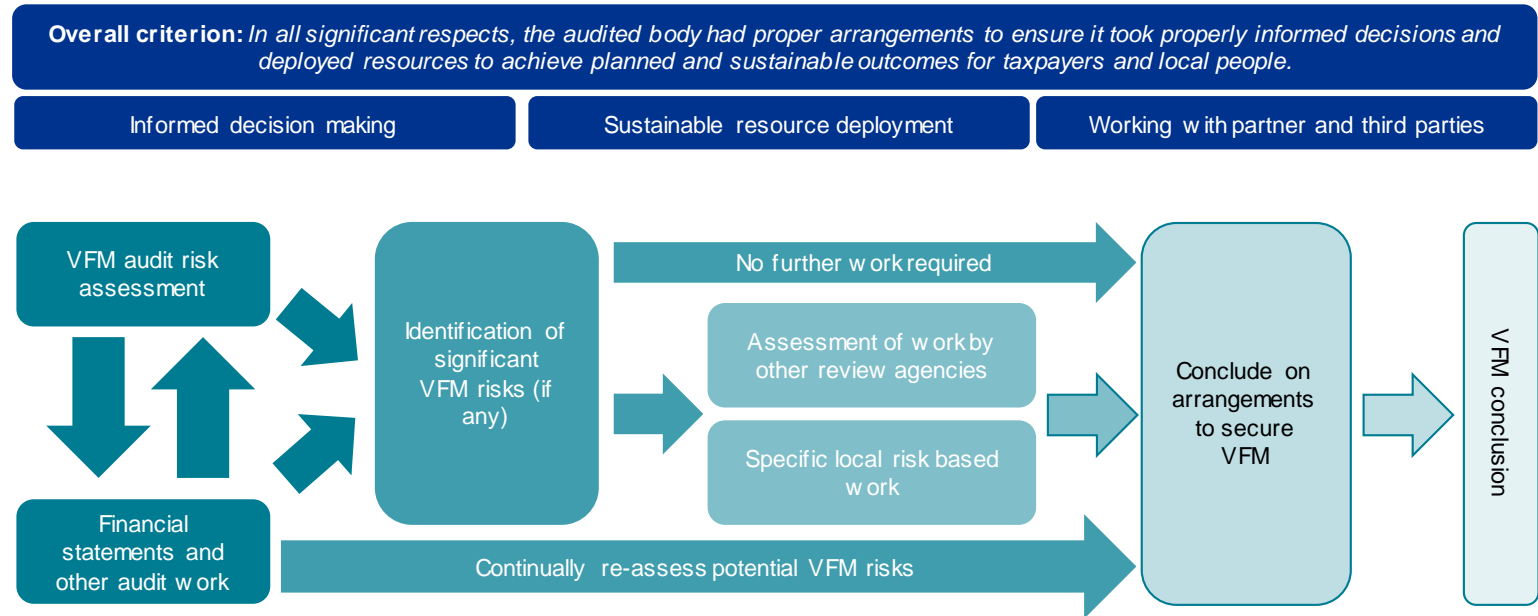
For our value for money conclusion we are required to work to the NAO Code of Audit Practice (issued in 2015 after the enactment of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014).

Our approach to VFM work follows the NAO's new guidance that was first introduced in 2015-16, is risk based and targets audit effort on the areas of greatest audit risk.

We have planned our audit to draw on our past experience of delivering this conclusion and have updated our approach as necessary. We will also consider reports from your regulators and review agencies.

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires auditors of local government bodies to be satisfied that the organisation "has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its Value for Money". This is supported by the Code of Audit Practice, published by the NAO in April 2015, which requires auditors to "take into account their knowledge of the relevant local sector as a whole, and the audited body specifically, to identify any risks that, in the auditor's judgement, have the potential to cause the auditor to reach an inappropriate conclusion on the audited body's arrangements."

The VFM process is shown in the diagram below:



We have completed our initial VFM risk assessment and have not identified any significant risks for the VFM conclusion. We will keep this under review during our audit and notify The Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services of any change.



# 4. Other matters

## Whole of government accounts (WGA)

We are required to review your WGA consolidation and undertake the work specified under the approach that is agreed with HM Treasury and the National Audit Office. Deadlines for production of the pack and the specified approach for 2017/18 have not yet been confirmed

## Elector challenge

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 gives electors certain rights. These are: the right to inspect the accounts; the right to ask the auditor questions about the accounts; and the right to object to the accounts. As a result of these rights, in particular the right to object to the accounts, we may need to undertake additional work to form our decision on the elector's objection. The additional work could range from a small piece where we interview an officer and review evidence to form our decision to a more detailed piece where we have to interview a range of officers, review significant amounts of evidence and seek legal representations on the issues raised. Costs incurred responding to questions or objections raised by electors is not part of the fee. This work will be charged in accordance with PSAA's fee scales.

## Our audit team

Your audit team has been drawn from our specialist public sector assurance department and is led by two key members of staff:

- **Jo Lees:** your Director has overall responsibility for the quality of the KPMG audit work and is the contact point within KPMG for the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services, the Chief Executive and Finance Director.
- **Charlotte Goodrich:** your Senior Manager is responsible for delivery of all our audit work. She will manage the completion of the different elements of our work, ensuring that they are coordinated and delivered in an effective manner.

The core audit team will be assisted by other KPMG staff, such as risk, tax, clinical or information specialists as necessary to deliver the plan.

## Reporting and communication

Reporting is a key part of the audit process, not only in communicating the audit findings for the year, but in ensuring that the audit team is accountable to you in addressing the issues identified as part of the audit strategy. Throughout the year we will communicate with you through meetings with the Finance team. Our communication outputs are included in Appendix 1.

## Independence and Objectivity

Auditors are required to be independent and objective. Appendix 2 provides more details of our confirmation of independence and objectivity.

# 4. Other matters

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## **Audit fee**

Our Audit Fee Letter 2017/2018 presented to you in April 2017 first set out our fees for the 2017/2018 audit. This letter also set out our assumptions. We have not considered it necessary to seek approval for any changes to the agreed fees at this stage.

Should there be a need to charge additional audit fees then this will be agreed with the S151 Officer and PSAA. If such a variation is agreed, we will report that to you in due course.

The planned audit fee for 2017/18 is £83,572 for the Authority (2016/17: £83,572).

## **Grants and claims work**

We undertake other grants and claims work for the Authority that does not fall under the PSAA arrangements:

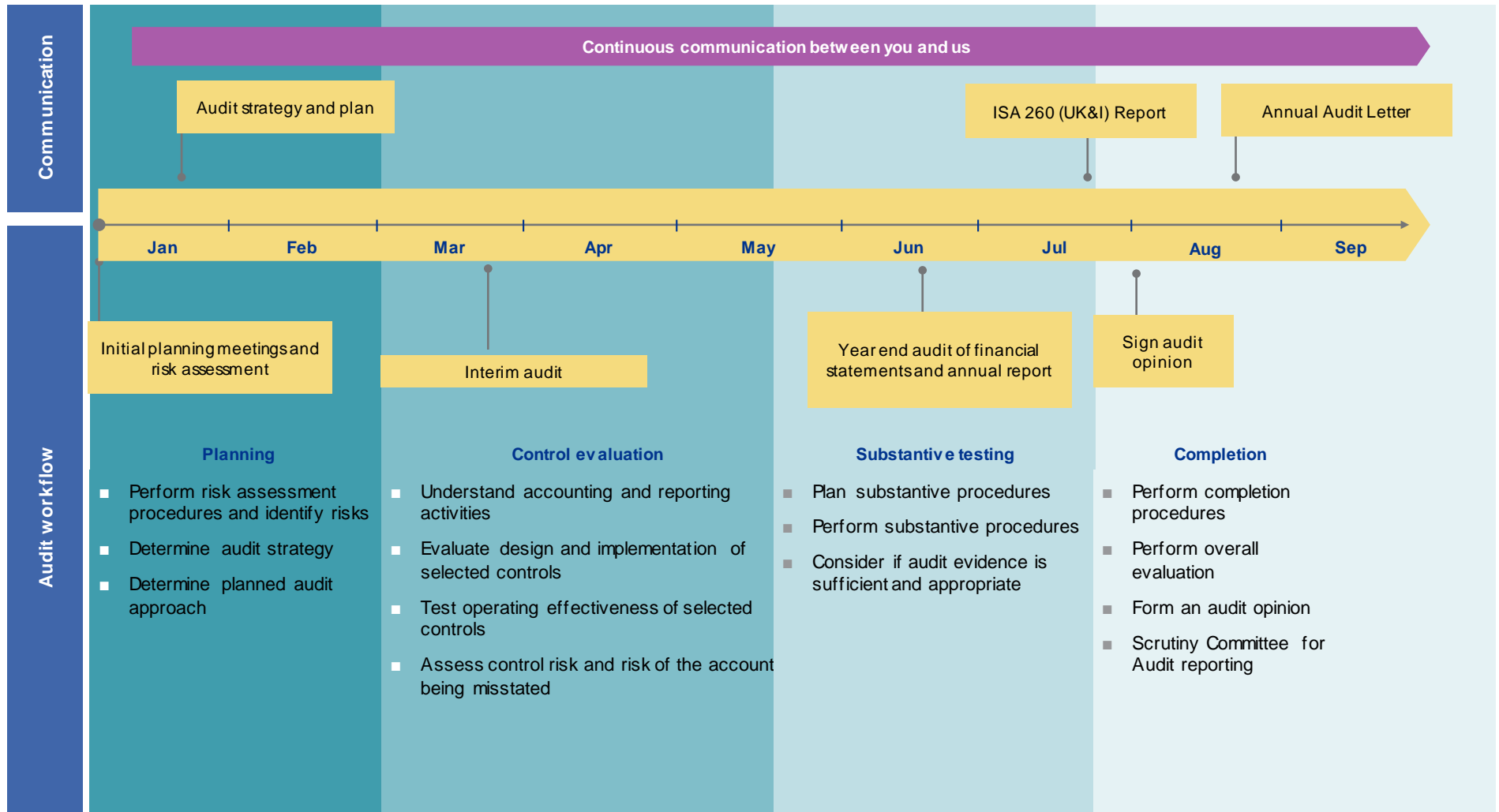
- Teachers pension contribution return: This audit is planned for September 2018. Our fee for this work is £4,000; and
- NCTL return: This audit is planned for November 2018. Our fee for this work is £2,000

## **Public interest reporting**

In auditing the accounts as your auditor we must consider whether, in the public interest, we should make a report on any matters coming to our notice in the course of our audit, in order for it to be considered by Members or brought to the attention of the public; and whether the public interest requires any such matter to be made the subject of an immediate report rather than at completion of the audit.

At this stage there are no matters that we wish to report.

# Appendix 1: Key elements of our financial statements audit approach



# Appendix 2: Independence and objectivity requirements

## ASSESSMENT OF OUR OBJECTIVITY AND INDEPENDENCE AS AUDITOR OF EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Professional ethical standards require us to provide to you at the planning stage of the audit a written disclosure of relationships (including the provision of non-audit services) that bear on KPMG LLP's objectivity and independence, the threats to KPMG LLP's independence that these create, any safeguards that have been put in place and why they address such threats, together with any other information necessary to enable KPMG LLP's objectivity and independence to be assessed.

In considering issues of independence and objectivity we consider relevant professional, regulatory and legal requirements and guidance, including the provisions of the Code of Audit Practice, the provisions of Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd's ('PSAA's') Terms of Appointment relating to independence and the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard and General Guidance Supporting Local Audit (Auditor General Guidance 1 – AGN01) issued by the National Audit Office ('NAO').

This Appendix is intended to comply with this requirement and facilitate a subsequent discussion with you on audit independence and addresses: General procedures to safeguard independence and objectivity; Breaches of applicable ethical standards; Independence and objectivity considerations relating to the provision of non-audit services; and Independence and objectivity considerations relating to other matters.

### General procedures to safeguard independence and objectivity

KPMG LLP is committed to being and being seen to be independent. As part of our ethics and independence policies, all KPMG LLP partners, Audit Directors and staff annually confirm their compliance with our ethics and independence policies and procedures. Our ethics and independence policies and procedures are fully consistent with the requirements of the FRC Ethical Standard. As a result we have underlying safeguards in place to maintain independence through: Instilling professional values; Communications; Internal accountability; Risk management; and Independent reviews.

We are satisfied that our general procedures support our independence and objectivity.

### Independence and objectivity considerations relating to the provision of non-audit services

#### Summary of fees

We have considered the fees charged by us to the authority and its affiliates for professional services provided by us during the reporting period. Facts and matters related to the provision of non-audit services and the safeguards put in place that bear upon our independence and objectivity, are set out in the following.

#### Analysis of Non-audit services for the year ended 31 March 2018

Description of scope of services	Principal threats to independence	Safeguards Applied	Basis of fee	Value of Services Delivered in the year ended 31 March 2018	Value of Services Committed but not yet delivered
				£000	£000
Audit of Teachers Pensions and NCTL returns	Self Review; assumption of management responsibility	KPMG audit staff will be used for performing the engagement, however the staff have not been involved in the preparation of the TPS/NCTL returns for the client, nor will the statutory audit of the Council financial statements concluded on the grant workal ready	Fixed fee as agreed in engagement letter	£0	£6,000

# Appendix 2: Independence and objectivity requirements

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Appropriate approvals have been obtained from PSAA for all non-audit services above the relevant thresholds provided by us during the reporting period. In addition, we monitor our fees to ensure that we comply with the 70% non-audit fee cap set by the NAO.

## **Independence and objectivity considerations relating to other matters**

There are no other matters that, in our professional judgment, bear on our independence which need to be disclosed to the Audit Committee.

## **Confirmation of audit independence**

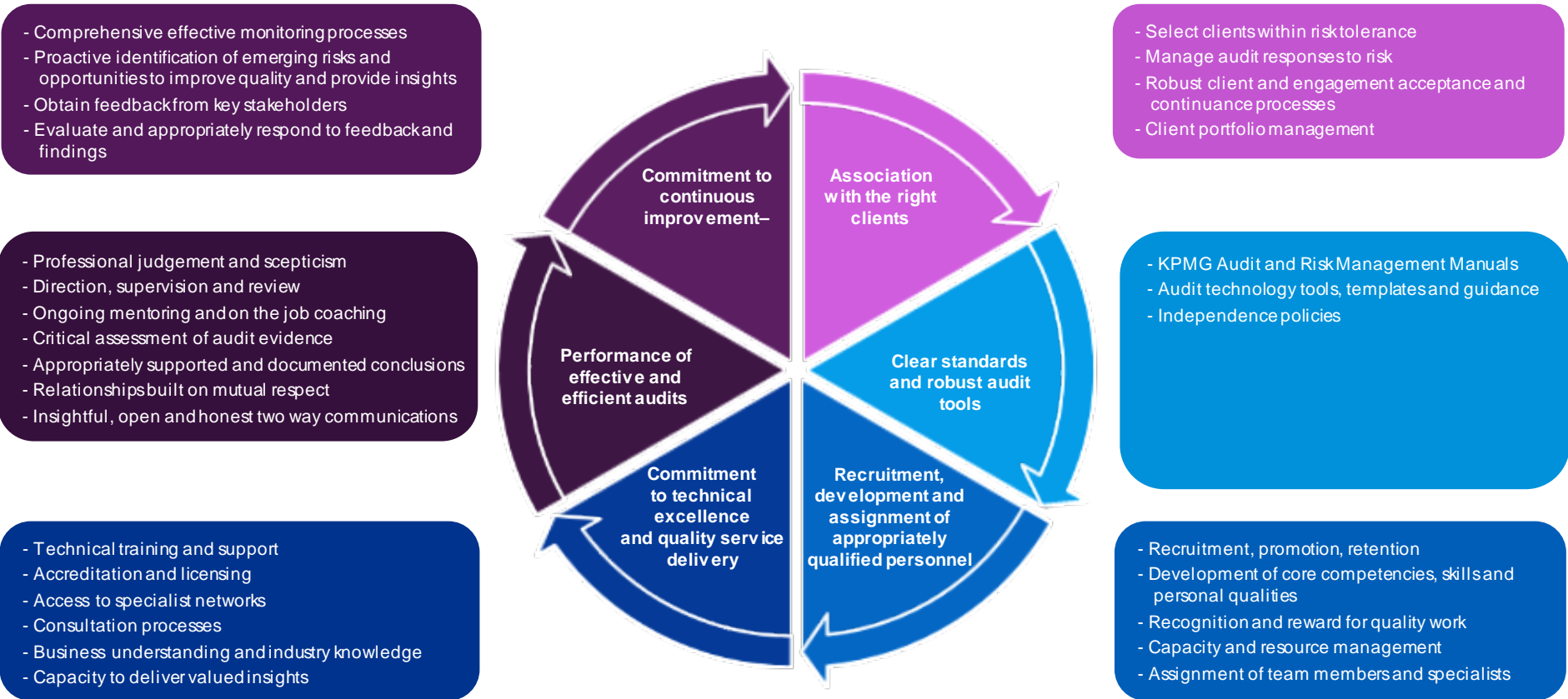
We confirm that as of the date of this report, in our professional judgment, KPMG LLP is independent within the meaning of regulatory and professional requirements and the objectivity of the Audit Director and audit staff is not impaired.

This report is intended solely for the information of the Scrutiny Committee for Audit, Best Value and Community Services of the authority and should not be used for any other purposes.

We would be very happy to discuss the matters identified above (or any other matters relating to our objectivity and independence) should you wish to do so.

# Appendix 3: Quality framework

Audit quality is at the core of everything we do at KPMG and we believe that it is not just about reaching the right opinion, but how we reach that opinion. To ensure that every partner and employee concentrates on the fundamental skills and behaviours required to deliver an appropriate and independent opinion, we have developed our global Audit Quality Framework





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