

# The Audit Plan for Kent County Council

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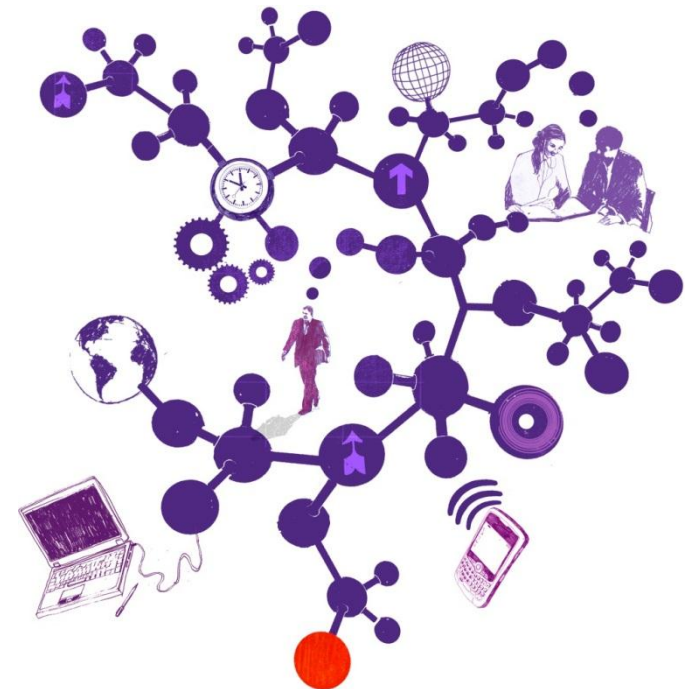
**Year ended 31 March 2013**

March 2013

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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.

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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. Financial pressures

- Impact of current and future spending reviews
- Reductions in the Council's main sources of funding
- Managing service provision with less resource against the increasing demand for services, especially children's and adults services
- Progress against savings plans



### 2. Government policy changes

- Government policy reforms in relation to social care, welfare and funding (Welfare reform Act 2012)
- Local Government Finance settlement 2012/13
- Increasing number of schools transferring to academy status



### 3. Public Health responsibilities

- The Council takes over responsibility for the public health agenda with effect from 1 April 2013.



### 4. Service developments

- Delivery of the adult social care transformation project and the significant savings arising from this
- Continued improvements to special children's service following the re-inspection by Ofsted
- The Council is restructuring its commercial services operations from 1 April 2013



## Our response

- We will review the Council's financial planning, monitoring and governance arrangements, focusing on the robustness of assumptions in the medium term financial plan
- We will review the Council's performance against the 2012/13 budget, including consideration of performance against the savings plan
- We will report on the Council's financial resilience, including benchmarking data for the sector, as part of our VfM Conclusion

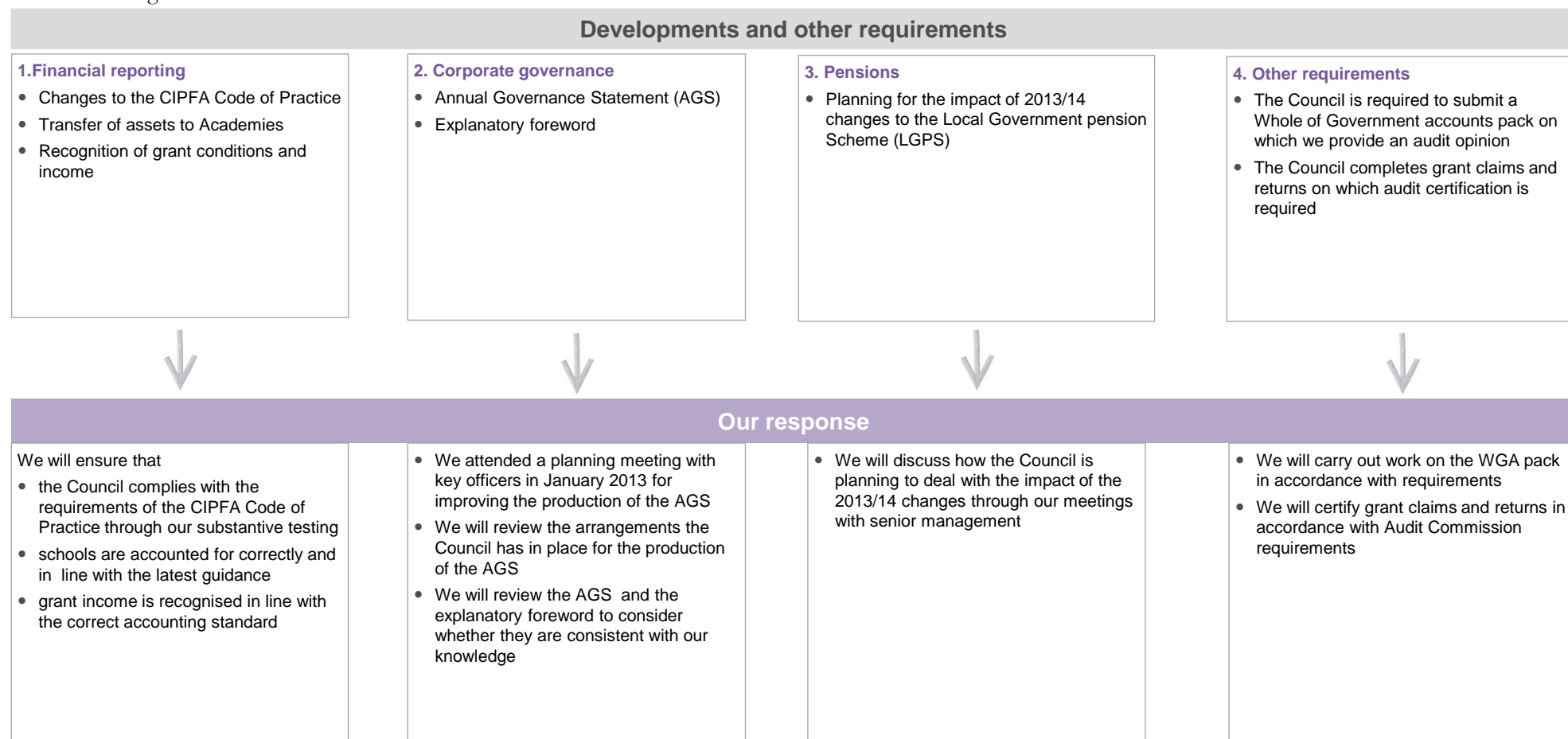
- We will discuss the impact of the legislative changes with the Council through our regular meetings with senior management and those charged with governance, providing a view where appropriate
- We will review how changes, risks and opportunities have been incorporated into the medium term financial plan

- We will discuss and monitor how the Council manages this new responsibility through our meetings with senior management and members
- We will liaise with internal audit to understand its assessment of the Council's governance arrangements

- We will review the robustness of savings assumptions for the adults social care project
- We will review the latest Ofsted inspection report and progress made against the improvement action plans
- We will liaise with officers to ensure governance arrangements are in place for the new structures

# 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 and associated guidance.



# Our audit approach

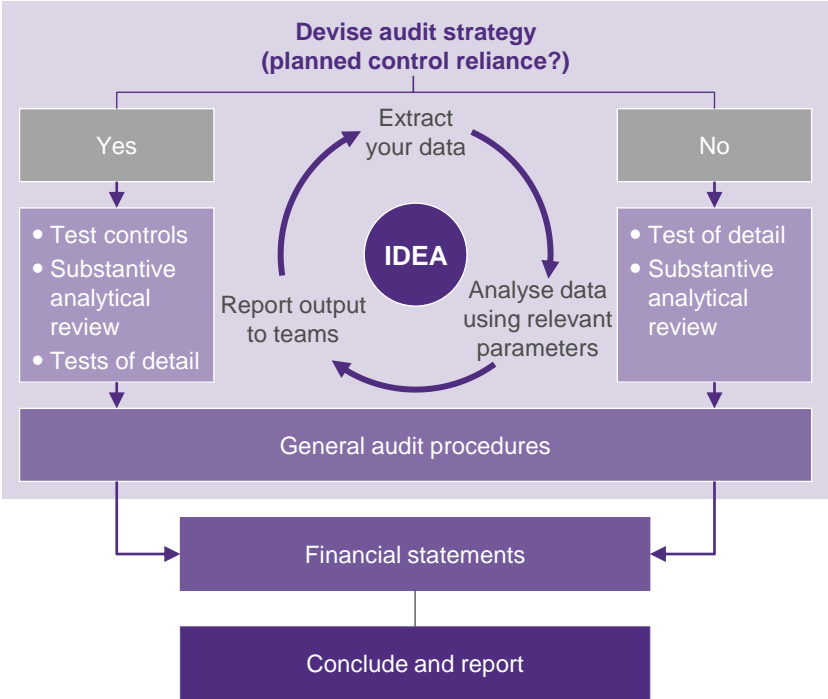
Global audit technology

Ensures compliance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs)

- \* Understanding the environment and the entity
- \* Understanding the business
- \* Understanding management's focus
- \* Evaluating the year's results

Inherent risks  
Significant risks  
Other risks  
Material balances

Develop audit plan to obtain reasonable assurance that the Financial Statements as a whole are free from material misstatement and prepared in all material<sup>a</sup> respects with the CIPFA Code of Practice framework using our global methodology and audit software



Note:  
a. An item would be considered material to the financial statements if, through its omission or non-disclosure, the financial statements would no longer show a true and fair view.



Creates and tailors audit programs

Stores audit evidence

Documents processes and controls

# An audit focused on risks

We undertake a risk based audit whereby we focus audit effort on those areas where we have identified a risk of material misstatement in the accounts. The table below shows how our audit approach focuses on the risks we have identified through our planning and review of the national risks affecting the sector. Definitions of the level of risk and associated work are given below:

**Significant** – Significant risks are typically non-routine transactions, areas of material judgement or those areas where there is a high underlying (inherent) risk of misstatement. We will undertake an assessment of controls (if applicable) around the risks and carry out detailed substantive testing.

**Other** – Other risks of material misstatement are typically those transaction cycles and balances where there are high values, large numbers of transactions and risks arising from, for example, system changes and issues identified from previous years audits. We will assess controls and undertake substantive testing, the level of which will be reduced where we can rely on controls.

**None** – Our risk assessment has not identified a risk of misstatement. We will undertake substantive testing of material balances. Where an item in the accounts is not material we do not carry out detailed substantive testing.

Account	Material (or potentially material) balance?	Transaction Cycle	Inherent risk	Material misstatement risk?	Description of Risk	Substantive testing?
Cost of services - operating expenses	Yes	Operating expenses	Medium	Other	Operating expenses understated	✓
Cost of services – employee remuneration	Yes	Employee remuneration	Medium	Other	Remuneration expenses not correct	✓
Cost of services – other revenues (fees & charges)	Yes	Other revenues	Low	None		✓
(Gains)/ Loss on disposal of non current assets	Yes	Property, Plant and Equipment	Low	None		✓
Precepts and Levies	No	Council Tax	Low	None		×

## An audit focused on risks (continued)

Account	Material (or potentially material) balance?	Transaction Cycle	Inherent risk	Material misstatement risk?	Description of Risk	Substantive testing?
Interest payable and similar charges	Yes	Borrowings	Low	None		✓
Pension Interest cost	No	Employee remuneration	Low	None		×
Interest & investment income	No	Investments	Low	None		×
Return on Pension assets	No	Employee remuneration	Low	None		×
Impairment of investments	No	Investments	Low	None		×
Investment properties: Income expenditure, valuation, changes & gain on disposal	No	Property, Plant & Equipment	Low	None		×
Income from council tax	Yes	Council Tax	Low	None		✓
NNDR Distribution	Yes	NNDR	Low	None		✓
PFI revenue support grant & other Government grants	Yes	Grant Income	Low	None		✓
Capital grants & Contributions (including those received in advance)	Yes	Property, Plant & Equipment	Low	None		✓



## An audit focused on risks (continued)

Account	Material (or potentially material) balance?	Transaction Cycle	Inherent risk	Material misstatement risk?	Description of Risk	Substantive testing?
(Surplus)/ Deficit on revaluation of non current assets	Yes	Property, Plant & Equipment	Low	None		✓
Actuarial (gains)/ Losses on pension fund assets & liabilities	Yes	Employee remuneration	Low	None		✓
Other comprehensive (gains)/ Losses	No	Revenue/ Operating expenses	Low	None		×
Property, Plant & Equipment	Yes	Property, Plant & Equipment	Medium	Other	PPE activity not valid	✓
Property, Plant & Equipment	Yes	Property, Plant & Equipment	Medium	Other	Revaluation measurements not correct	✓
Heritage assets & Investment property	No	Property, Plant & Equipment	Low	None		×
Intangible assets	No	Intangible assets	Low	None		×
Investments (long & short term)	Yes	Investments	Low	None		✓
Debtors (long & short term)	Yes	Revenue	Low	None		✓
Assets held for sale	No	Property, Plant & Equipment	Low	None		×
Inventories	No	Inventories	Low	None		×
Cash & cash Equivalents	Yes	Bank & Cash	Low	None		✓

## An audit focused on risks (continued)

Account	Material (or potentially material) balance?	Transaction Cycle	Inherent risk	Material misstatement risk?	Description of Risk	Substantive testing?
Borrowing (long & short term)	Yes	Debt	Low	None		✓
Creditors (long & Short term)	Yes	Operating Expenses	Medium	Other	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period	✓
Provisions (long & short term)	Yes	Provision	Low	None		✓
Pension liability	Yes	Employee remuneration	Low	None		✓
Reserves	Yes	Equity	Low	None		✓

# 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	Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and testing of revenue recognition policies</li><li>• Substantive testing on material revenue streams</li></ul>
Management over-ride of controls	Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management</li><li>• Testing of journal entries</li><li>• Review of unusual significant transactions</li></ul>

# Other risks

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).

Other reasonably possible risks	Description	Work completed to date	Further work planned
Operating expenses	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and walkthrough of controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing of payments for completeness, classification and occurrence</li> <li>• Review of schools compliance team visits</li> </ul>
Employee remuneration	Remuneration expenses not correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and walkthrough of controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing of payroll records</li> <li>• Predictive analytical review of schools employee remuneration expenses</li> <li>• Review of schools compliance team visits</li> </ul>
Employee remuneration	Payroll tax obligations understated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and walkthrough of controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing of HMRC returns to payroll records</li> </ul>
Property, Plant & Equipment	PPE activity not valid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None - year end processes and controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and walkthrough of controls</li> <li>• Review the Council's recognition of schools in its balance sheet and test the accounting treatment of schools transferring off the balance sheet</li> <li>• Review the reconciliation of the PPE note to the new asset registers</li> <li>• Test significant in year movements and the year end balance to ensure disclosure and accounting treatment are correct</li> </ul>
Property, Plant & Equipment	Revaluation measurement not correct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None – year end processes and controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and walkthrough of controls</li> <li>• Testing of revaluations in year</li> <li>• Reliance on an expert procedures, including reviewing revaluation trends against the auditors' expert</li> </ul>

# Results of interim audit work

## Scope

As part of the interim audit work and in advance of our final accounts audit fieldwork, we have considered:

- the effectiveness of the internal audit function;
- internal audit's work on the Council's key financial systems;
- walkthrough testing to confirm whether controls are implemented as per our understanding in areas where we have identified a risk of material misstatement; and
- a review of Information Technology (IT) controls.

	Work performed / planned	Conclusion / Summary
<b>Internal audit</b>	<p>We have reviewed internal audit's overall arrangements against the CIPFA Code of Practice.</p> <p>Where the arrangements are deemed to be adequate, we can gain assurance from the overall work undertaken by internal audit and can conclude that the service itself is contributing positively to the internal control environment and overall governance arrangements within the Council.</p>	<p>We concluded that Internal Audit continues to provide an independent and satisfactory service to the Council. We can take assurance from their work in contributing to an effective internal control environment at the Council.</p> <p>We are not planning to directly rely on any key financial system audits. However, we are undertaking a joint review of corporate governance and will review their work in relation to the Value for Money Conclusion.</p>
<b>Walkthrough testing</b>	<p>Walkthrough tests were completed in relation to the specific accounts risks for operating expenses and payroll which we consider to present a risk of material misstatement to the financial statements.</p> <p>The walkthrough of the system for property, plant and equipment is planned for April 2013 as the processes and controls operate at year end only.</p>	<p>No significant issues were noted and in-year internal controls were observed to have been implemented in accordance with our documented understanding for operating expenses and payroll systems.</p> <p>The property, plant and equipment walkthrough is outstanding.</p>

## Results of interim audit work (continued)

	<b>Work performed / planned</b>	<b>Conclusion / Summary</b>
<b>Review of information technology (IT) controls</b>	Our information systems specialist is currently undertaking a high level review of the general IT control environment, as part of the overall review of the internal controls system.	The work is currently being undertaken and any issues arising will be reported to the committee at the next meeting.
<b>Journal entry controls</b>	<p>We will review the Council's journal entry policies and procedures as part of determining our journal entry testing strategy.</p> <p>To date we have discussed with officers the process for downloading all journals raised in the year to confirm the completeness of entries. We plan to undertake detailed testing on journal transactions recorded for the first ten months of the financial year in April 2013.</p>	<p>The journals testing will be completed in April 2013 for the first ten months of the financial year.</p> <p>The remaining two months and year end journals will be reviewed at the accounts audit visit.</p>
<b>Public Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes</b>	We will review the Council's PFI accounting models to confirm they remain up to date, reasonable and provide materially entries in the financial statements.	The work will be undertaken in April 2013.
<b>Related party transactions</b>	As Council elections take place in May 2013 we will assess the Council's arrangements for ensuring that all declarations of interest and related party transactions are recorded before any potential changes in elected members .	The work will be undertaken in April 2013.
<b>Recommendations from 2011/12 ISA 260 report</b>	We have followed up the prior year recommendations made in the 2011/12 ISA 260 report to understand the Council's progress in implementing the member approved actions.	Responses from management as to the progress of implementing the recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.

# Value for Money

## Introduction

The Code of Audit Practice 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.

## 2012/13 VfM conclusion

Our Value for Money conclusion is based on two reporting criteria specified by the Audit Commission.

We tailor our VfM work to ensure that as well as addressing high risk areas it is, wherever possible, focused on the Council's priority areas and can be used as a source of assurance for members.

The results of all our local VfM audit work and key messages 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.

## Code criteria

The Council has proper arrangements in place for:

- securing financial resilience
- challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

We will consider whether the Council is prioritising its resources with tighter budget

## Work to be undertaken

Risk-based work focusing on arrangements relating to financial governance, strategic financial planning and financial control.

Specifically we will:

- review the achievement of savings identified in the medium term financial plan for 2012/13 and the robustness of plans to support the savings identified in the 2013/14 budget, including income generation plans;
- review the robustness of the savings plans from the adults social care transformation project;
- review the arrangements in place for budgeting, forecasting and reporting capital expenditure, particularly focussing on schools capital projects;
- follow up review of the corporate governance arrangements (jointly with Internal Audit);
- review progress made in risk management and performance management arrangements made in 2011/12; and
- review the re-inspection report by Ofsted to determine whether the 'except for' conclusion can be removed.

# Logistics and our team

## The audit cycle - 2013



Date	Activity
16/01/2013	Planning meeting
04 – 15/02/2013	Interim site work
11/04/2013	The audit plan presented to Governance and Audit Committee
17/06/2013	Year end fieldwork commences
10/07/2013	Audit findings clearance meeting
24/07/2013	Audit Committee meeting to report our findings
24/07/2013	Sign financial statements and VfM conclusion
September 2013	Issue Annual Audit Letter 2013

## Our team

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# Fees and independence

## Fees

	£
Council audit	207,900
Grant certification	6,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>214,150</b>

## Our fee assumptions include:

- Our fees are exclusive of VAT
- 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

Ethical standards and International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 260 require us to give you full and fair disclosure of matters relating to our independence. In this context, we disclose the following to you as potential threats to independence:

- The mother of the in-charge auditor is a teacher in an academy school. Although there is no impact on the audit opinion as she is not employed by the Council we have put safeguards in place so the auditor does not undertake the audit of the Teachers' Pensions Return; and
- The mother of a trainee auditor involved in the audit is a teacher at a LA maintained school. The mother is employed on a consultancy basis so is not on the Council's payroll. However, as the mother receives a pension we have put safeguards in place so the auditor does not undertake the audit of the Teachers' Pension Return.

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](http://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
<b>Our communication plan</b>		
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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# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## Action plan from 2011/12 ISA 260 report

Rec No.	Recommendation	Priority	Management responsibility and target date	Management response on implementation of recommendation
1	The Council should ensure that lifecycle costs are based on the actual costs incurred and the actual timing of those costs.	Low	Capital Finance Manager - 31 March 2013	We are trying to obtain details of actual lifecycle costs from contractors and will use these wherever possible. However, due to the current level of lifecycle costs it would not lead to material error if we continue to use the model costs for 12/13.
2	Officers should reconcile the accounts receivable system to the GL on a monthly basis using the improved process.	Medium	Chief Accountant – 31 August 2012	The improved process has been rolled out and the reconciliation process is being undertaken by the Systems Team within the Chief Accountant Team.
3	The pension fund bank reconciliation process should ensure that cash held on behalf of the fund by the Council should be transferred back to it on a regular basis, with the cash held as at 31 March being shown as cash in transit in the reconciliations and financial statements.	High	Treasury & Investments Manager – 31 March 2013	Arrangements have been made for the transfer of the cash from KCC to the Pension Fund. The cash balance has been reconciled monthly through 2012-13 and arrangements will be made before 31 March 2013 to clear any balance owing.
4	Officers should ensure that the requirements of IAS32 (Financial Instruments: Presentation) are met when producing the financial instruments notes for the Council and Pension Fund.	Low	Chief Accountant (Council) and Principal Accountant Treasury / Senior Accountant Investments (Pension Fund) – 31 March 2013	Attending a workshop on Financial Instruments which will hopefully assist in the improvement of the presentation of the note in the accounts.

## Action plan from 2011/12 ISA 260 report (continued)

Rec No.	Recommendation	Priority	Management responsibility and target date	Management response on implementation of recommendation
5	Officers should continue improvements made in the year in taking prompt corrective action to ensure payments from admitted and scheduled bodies do not breach 19 days.	Low	Treasury and Investments Manager / Principal Accountant Pension Fund – 31 March 2013	Officers have reminded all employers of the due date of the 19 <sup>th</sup> for receipt of contributions. Each month a report is produced showing late payers and these are followed up.
6	Following completion of the service restructure, regularly review staff resources based on service demand changes and resource skills and experience.	Medium	Director of Specialist Children's Services – 31 March 2013	SCS Divisional Management Team has the restructure under constant review and it has been subject to additional external validation by a peer review and OFSTED inspections. Resources have been redeployed where pressures have arisen, for example in the CRU and in Thanet where the mismatch in skills base and the incoming workload required additional resource. This will continue to be closely monitored to maximise the quality and timeliness of all interventions.
7	The Corporate Board should consider self-assessing the effectiveness of its developing culture in the next 6 months.	Medium	Corporate Board – 31 December 2012	The formal self-assessment began early 2013. This will conclude the informal 1:1 self assessment process that began in the Summer 2012. We are slightly behind the deadline, partly in order to capture the end of a difficult budget process and how the 'developing culture' affected that. The latest series of 1:1 meetings with Corporate Directors and Cabinet Members is informing the progress, and early indications are very positive. The outcome of this self-assessment will be known by 31 March 2013.

## Action plan from 2011/12 ISA 260 report (continued)

Rec No.	Recommendation	Priority	Management responsibility and target date	Management response on implementation of recommendation
8	The Council needs to ensure that the risk management software is successfully implemented and rolled out to risk owners with clear guidance on using the system as a 'live' data information hub.	High	Business Integration Manager – 31 December 2012	Configuration and testing of the system took place in late summer / early autumn 2012. The system was piloted in the Highways & Transportation Division and has been rolled out to other areas of the business, with Risk Monitoring Officers giving training on the system and its appropriate use. Key risk information that was previously completed on paper risk registers is now held within the system. There will be ongoing work to embed and fully utilise the benefits of the system throughout 2013. The system implementation complements a substantial revamp of the risk management arrangements for the Authority; with refreshed Corporate, Directorate and Divisional risk registers and mitigating actions. Risk registers are reviewed regularly by DMTs, CMT, Corporate Board and Cabinet Committees and progress on mitigating actions is examined and challenged (where necessary) by the Performance and Evaluation Board.



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