



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Planning report to the Board on the 2020/21 audit

Issued on 18 February 2021 for the meeting on 2 March 2021

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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 2020/21 audit. I would like to draw your attention to the key messages of this paper:

Audit plan

We have updated our understanding of the Board, including discussion with management and review of relevant documents. This has included consideration of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on 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 expectation 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. 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. The rationale for this is discussed further on page 25.

In carrying out our annual risk assessment, we have considered the arrangement's in place for each dimension, building on our findings and conclusions from previous years' audits as well as planning guidance published by Audit Scotland. Our significant risks are presented on page 25.

Introduction (continued)

The key messages in this report (continued)

Regulatory change

The implementation of the new standard on leases, IFRS 16, has been deferred again for another year, with a revised implementation date of 2022/23 and will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases.

Our audit approach reflects changes to International Standards on Auditing (UK) on going concern (ISA (UK) 570) and management estimates (ISA (UK) 540), and Practice Note 10, effective for this year.

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.

As part of our planning discussions with management, we have shared our *“Key Lessons from 2019/2020 Audits”* to help prepare for the 2020/21 audit, ensuring a focus on quality.

Added value

Our aim is to add value to the Board through our external 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 28 to 33 of this paper.

Pat Kenny
Audit Director

Responsibilities of the Board

Helping you fulfil your responsibilities

Why do we interact with the Board?

To communicate audit scope

To provide timely and relevant observations

To provide additional information to help you fulfil your broader responsibilities

We use this symbol to highlight areas of our audit where the Board needs to focus attention.



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.

- At the start of each annual audit cycle, ensure that the scope of the external audit is appropriate.

- Implement a policy on the engagement of the external auditor to supply non-audit services.

Oversight of external audit

Integrity of reporting

Internal controls and risks

Oversight of internal audit

Whistle-blowing and fraud

- Review the internal control and risk management systems (unless expressly addressed by separate risk committee).

- Explain what actions have been, or are being taken to remedy any significant failings or weaknesses.

- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the proportionate and independent investigation of any concerns raised by staff in connection with improprieties.

- Impact assessment of key judgements and level of management challenge.

- Review of external audit findings, key judgements, level of misstatements.

- Assess the quality of the internal team, their incentives and the need for supplementary skillsets.

- Assess the completeness of disclosures, including consistency with disclosures on business model and strategy and, where requested by the Board, provide advice in respect of the fair, balanced and understandable statement.

- Consider annually whether the scope of the internal audit programme is adequate.

- Monitor and review the effectiveness of the internal audit activities.

Your control environment

What we consider when we plan the audit

We expect management and those charged with governance to recognise the importance of a strong control environment and take proactive steps to deal with deficiencies identified on a timely basis.

Responsibilities of management

Auditing standards require us to only accept or continue with an audit engagement when the preconditions for an audit are present. These preconditions include obtaining the agreement of management and those charged with governance that they acknowledge and understand their responsibilities for, amongst other things, internal control as is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Board

As explained further in the Responsibilities of the Board slide on the previous page, the Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing the internal control and risk management systems (unless expressly addressed by a separate risk committee).
- Explaining what actions have been, or are being taken to remedy any significant failings or weaknesses.

As stakeholders tell us that they wish to understand how external audit challenges and responds to the quality of an entity's control environment, we are seeking to enhance how we plan and report on the results of the audit in response. We will be placing increased focus on how the control environment impacts the audit, from our initial risk assessment, to our testing approach and how we report on misstatements and control deficiencies.

Reliance on controls



We will seek to undertake design and implementation testing on controls in respect of our identified significant risk areas. In accordance with forthcoming revisions to ISAs, we will assess inherent risk and control risk associated with accounting estimates.

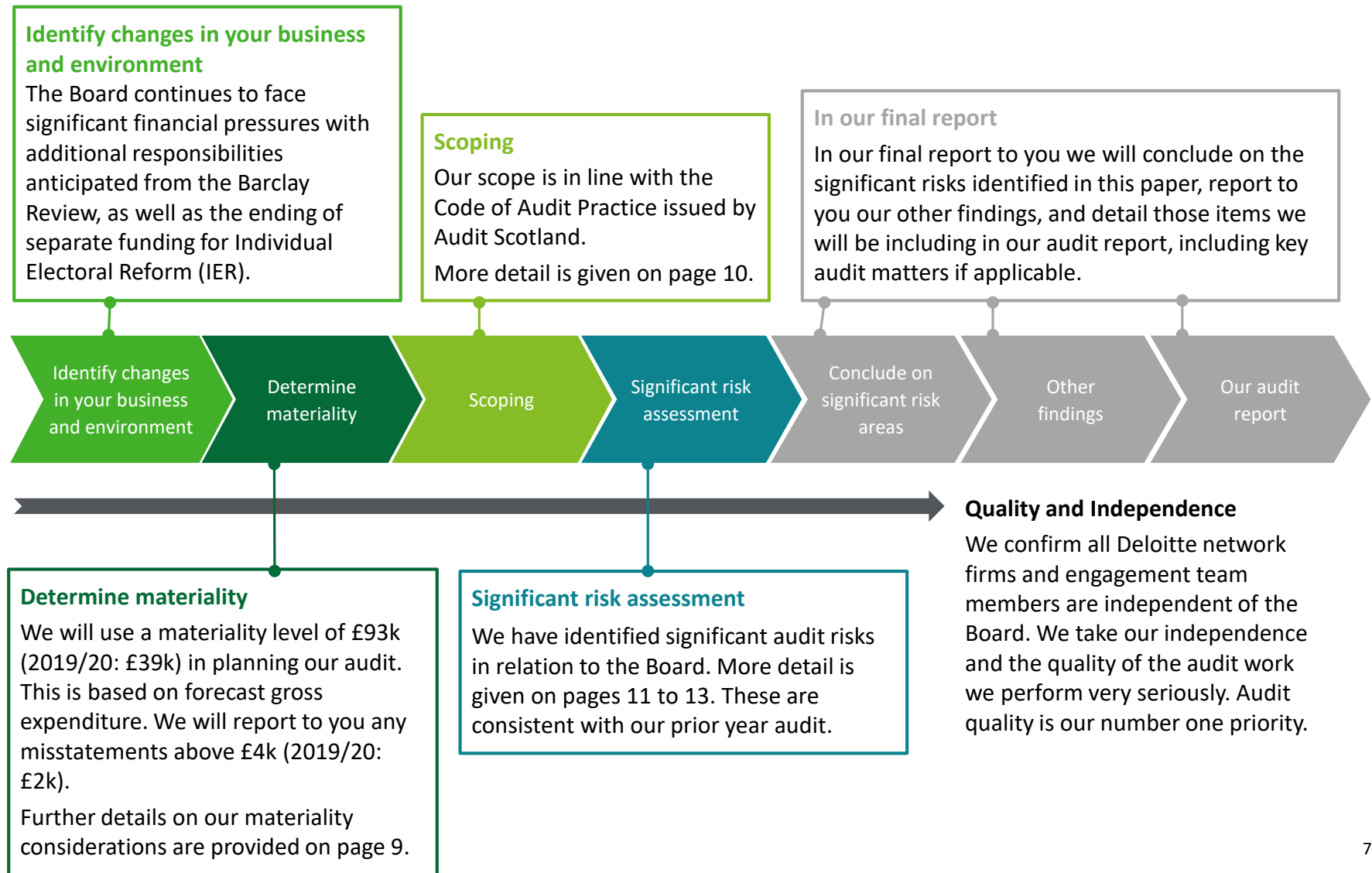
Performance materiality



We set performance materiality as a percentage of materiality to reduce the probability that, in aggregate, uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceed materiality. We determine performance materiality, with reference to factors such as the quality of the control environment and the historical error rate. Where we are unable to rely on controls, we may use a lower level of performance materiality.

Our audit explained

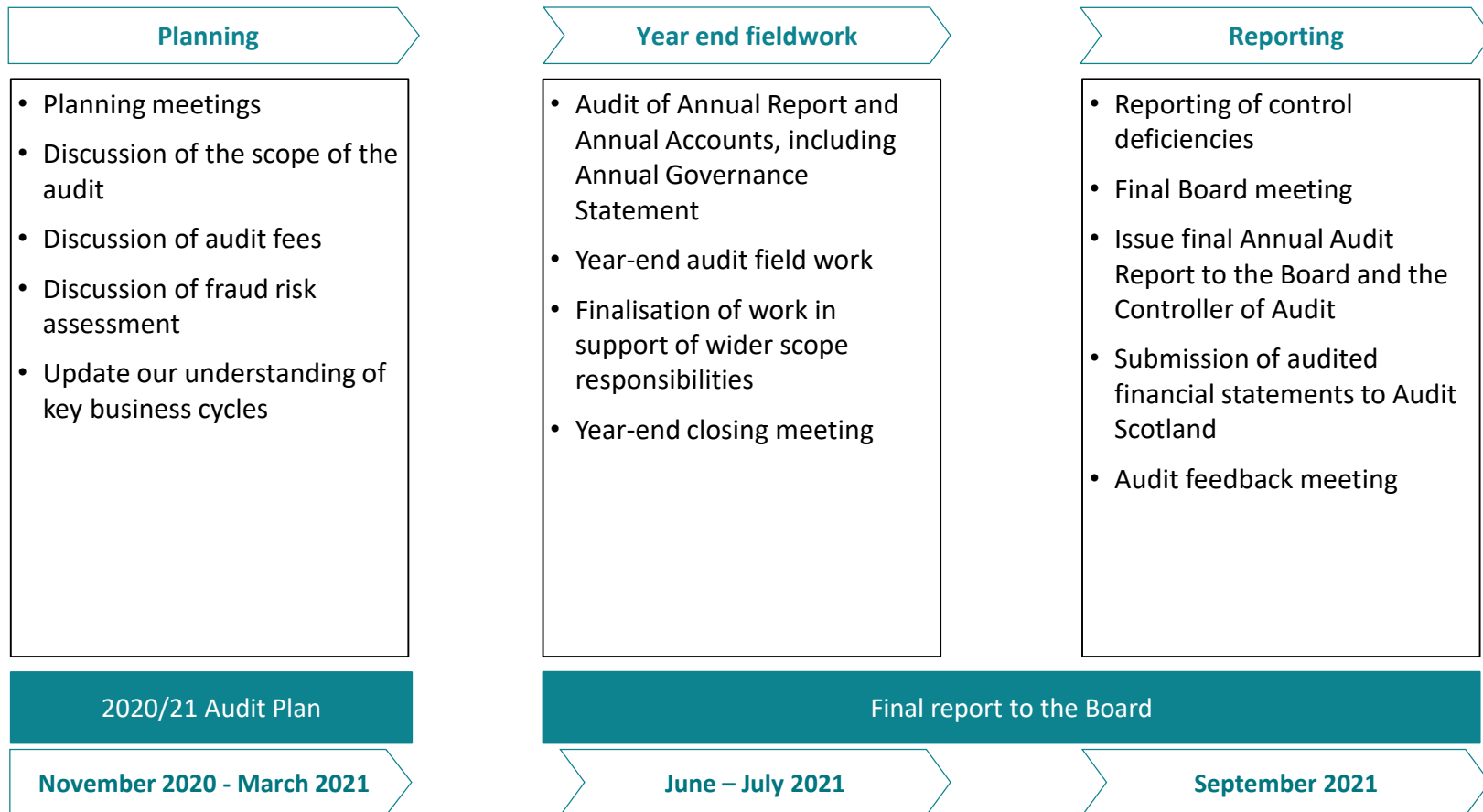
We tailor our audit to your business and your strategy



Continuous communication and reporting

Planned timing of the audit

As the audit plan is executed throughout the year, the results will be analysed continuously and conclusions (preliminary and otherwise) will be drawn. The following sets out the expected timing of our reporting to and communication with you.



Ongoing communication and feedback

Materiality

Our approach to materiality

Basis of our materiality benchmark

- The Audit Director has determined materiality as £93k (2019/20: £39k) and performance materiality as £65k (2019/20: £31k) , based on professional judgement, the requirements of auditing standards and the financial measures most relevant to users of the financial statements.
- We have used 3.5% of forecast gross expenditure as the benchmark for determining materiality and applied 70% as performance materiality. We have judged expenditure to be the most relevant measure for the users of the accounts.
- The approach is consistent with previous years. However, the percentages applied have been revisited to take into account our knowledge of the Board and our understanding of the control environment, including the increased fraud risks as a result of the pandemic.

Reporting to those charged with governance

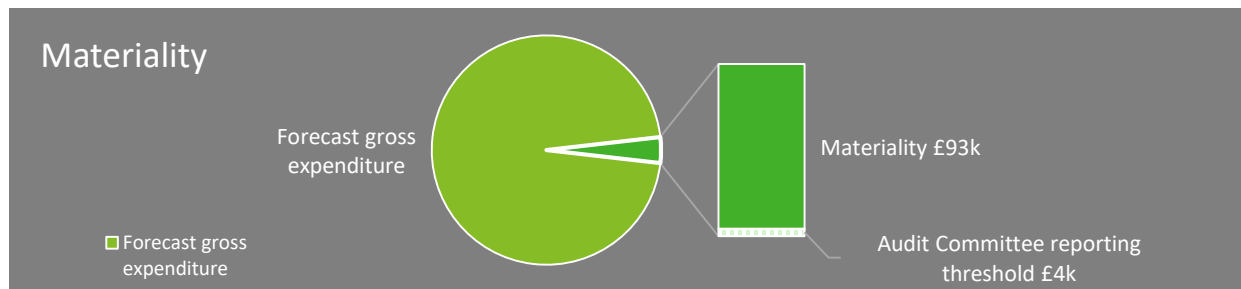
- We will report to you all misstatements found in excess of £4k (2019/20: £2k).
- We will report to you misstatements below this threshold if we consider them to be material by nature.

- Our approach to determining the materiality benchmark 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 the Board 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;
- explain any normalised or adjusted benchmarks we use, if appropriate; and
- explain the concept of performance materiality and state what percentage of materiality we used, with our rationale.



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
1. Auditing the annual accounts	Annual Audit Plan Independent auditor's report	2 March 2021 September 2021
2. Audit dimensions	Annual Audit Plan Annual Audit Report	2 March 2021 September 2021
3. Provide information on cases of fraud	Fraud Returns	Quarterly (30 November 2020, 28 February 2021, 31 May 2021 and 31 August 2021)

Significant risks

Significant risk dashboard

Risk	Fraud risk	Planned approach to controls	Level of management judgement	Page no
Occurrence of income				12
Management override of controls				13

Level of management judgement



High degree of management judgement



Some degree of management judgement



Limited management judgement

Controls approach adopted



Assess design & implementation

Significant risks (continued)

Occurrence of income



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.



**Deloitte
response and
challenge**

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 2021 to confirm all income is correctly recorded in the ledger;
- confirm that the reconciliations performed during 2020/21 have been reviewed on a regular basis; and
- assess the design and implementation of the controls around recognition of income.

Significant risks (continued)

Management override of controls



Risk identified

Management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

Although management is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the entity, we planned our audit so that we had a reasonable expectation of detecting material misstatements to the financial statements and accounting records.



Deloitte response and challenge

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

Test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements. In designing and performing audit procedures for such tests, we plan to:

- Test the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing;
- Make inquiries of individuals involved in the financial reporting process about inappropriate or unusual activity relating to the processing of journal entries and other adjustments;
- Select journal entries and other adjustments made at the end of a reporting period; and
- Consider the need to test journal entries and other adjustments throughout the period.

Review accounting estimates for biases and evaluate whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. In performing this review, we plan to:

- Evaluate whether the judgments and decisions made by management in making the accounting estimates included in the financial statements, even if they are individually reasonable, indicate a possible bias on the part of the entity's management that may represent a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. If so, we will re-evaluate the accounting estimates taken as a whole; and
- Perform a retrospective review of management judgements and assumptions related to significant accounting estimates reflected in the financial statements of the prior year.

For significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the entity, or that otherwise appear to be unusual given our understanding of the entity and its environment and other information obtained during the audit, we shall evaluate whether the business rationale (or the lack thereof) of the transactions suggests that they may have been entered into to engage in fraudulent financial reporting or to conceal misappropriation of assets.

Other areas of focus

Expenditure recognition



Risk identified and key judgements

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 basis that most public bodies are net spending bodies, therefore the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related 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.



Deloitte response and challenge

We will perform the following procedures to address the risk:

- Detailed analytical procedures on all invoices processed in the year to assess the risk of a material misstatement; and
- Testing of creditors balances at the year-end to assess completeness of expenditure.

Other areas of focus (continued)

Pension liability



Risk identified and key judgements

The Board participates in one defined benefits scheme:

- The Strathclyde Pension Fund, administered by Glasgow City Council.

The net pension liability has improved from a net liability of £610k in 2018/19 to a net asset of £566k in 2019/20. The movement is a combination of a reduction of £1,034k in the fair value of the assets and a reduction of £2,210k in the liabilities as a result of demographic changes and financial assumptions. The liability also continues to be affected by the McCloud and Goodwin legal cases.

Hymans Robertson LLP are the Board's appointed actuary, who produce a detailed report outlining the estimated liability at the year-end along with the associated disclosure requirements.

The pension liability valuation is an area of audit focus due to the material value and significant assumptions used in the calculation of the liability. The valuations are prepared by a reputable actuary using standard methodologies which have been considered as appropriate in previous years and no significant changes in the membership of the scheme or accrued benefits are expected in the current year. As a result, we have not identified this as a significant risk.



Deloitte response and challenge

We will perform the following procedures to address the risk:

- Assess the independence and expertise of the actuary supporting the basis of reliance upon their work;
- Review and challenge the assumptions made by Hymans Robertson;
- Obtain assurance from the auditor of the pension fund over the controls for providing accurate data to the actuary;
- Consider the impact of the Triennial Review of the pension fund;
- Assess the reasonableness of the Board's share of the total assets of the scheme with the Pension Fund financial statements;
- Review and challenge the calculation of the impact of the McCloud and Goodwin cases on pension liabilities; and
- Review the disclosures within the accounts against the Code.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

Impact on our audit

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the 2019/20 audit process, despite impacting relatively late in the year. We would expect there to be guidance as we approach year-end on accounting and disclosure requirements for 2020/21, where the impact has been much more extensive on all organisations.

Requirements

A key element of this will be communicating risks and governance impacts in narrative reporting, consistent with the Financial Reporting Council's guidance to organisations on the importance of communicating the impact of COVID-19 and related uncertainties, including their impact on resilience and going concern assessments.

Entity-specific explanations of the current and expected effects of COVID-19 and the Board's plans to mitigate those effects should be included in the narrative reporting (including where relevant the Annual Governance Statement), including in the discussion on Key Risks impacting an organisation.

Actions

While there may be greater clarity as we approach year-end, we would expect organisations as part of their reporting to conduct a thorough assessment of the current and potential future effects of the COVID-19 pandemic including:

- Consideration of the impact across the Board's operations, including on its income streams, supply chains and cost base, and the consequent impacts on financial position;
 - The scenarios assumed in making forecasts and on the sensitivities arising should other potential scenarios materialise (including different funding scenarios); and
 - The effect of events after the reporting date, including the nature of non-adjusting events and an estimate of their financial effect, where possible.
-

Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (continued)

Impact on our audit (continued)

Impact on the Board and management actions	Impact on annual report and financial statements	Impact on our audit
<p>We will consider the key impacts on the Board such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interruptions to service provision• Supply chain disruptions• Unavailability of personnel• Reductions in income	<p>We have considered the impact of the outbreak on the annual report and financial statements, discussed further on the next slide including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrative reporting, including disclosures on financial sustainability• Key risk disclosures• Impact on property, plant and equipment valuations• Impairment of non-current assets• Allowance for expected credit losses• Events after the reporting period and relevant disclosure	<p>We will continue to assess the impact on the audit including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource planning• Timetable of the audit• Impact on our risk assessment• Logistics including meetings with entity personnel

Impact on annual report and financial statements

Impact on Property, Plant and Equipment

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors issued a practice alert, as a result of which valuers identified a material valuation uncertainty at 31 March 2020 for most types of property valuation. This practice alert was withdrawn in September 2020. Valuation reports at March 2020 typically identified a need to consider potential impairments in future periods, and this year's valuations may reflect more significant movements.

The Board will need to consider the approach to its valuation (including any changes as a result of the pandemic and consequent service and organisational changes on the "modern equivalent asset" assumed in valuations). Boards will also need to consider whether there are any indications of impairment of assets requiring adjustment at 31 March 2021.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (continued)

Impact on our audit (continued)

Impact on annual report and financial statements

Expected credit losses

While most debtors are with public sector entities (where significant changes in recoverability are not expected), for non-public sector debtors, the Board will need to consider the level of provision required for expected credit losses under IFRS 9.

Narrative and other reporting issues

The following areas will need to be considered by the Board:

- Narrative reporting as well as the usual reporting requirements will need to cover the effects of the pandemic on services, operations, performance, strategic direction, resources and financial sustainability.
- Reporting judgements and estimation uncertainty, the Board will need to report the impact on material transactions including decisions made on the measurements of assets and liabilities.

Going concern assessment

The financial statements should include disclosure on the basis of the Board's going concern assessment, including related uncertainties.

The Board also needs to report on the impact of financial pressures and its financial sustainability in the narrative report, as well as any relevant liquidity reporting requirements under IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures.

Events after the reporting period and relevant disclosures

Events are likely to continue to move swiftly, and the Board will need to consider the events after the reporting period and whether these events will be adjusting or non-adjusting and make decisions on a transaction by transaction basis.

Reporting hot topics

Increased focus on quality reporting



Deloitte view

The expectations of corporate reporting, reflected in the Financial Reporting Council's ('the FRC') monitoring and enforcement priorities, are increasing. While the focus is primarily on corporate entities, we highlight these areas where improved disclosures would help meet stakeholder expectations.



The potential impacts of Brexit

Depending upon events, organisations may be preparing annual reports against the backdrop of continued uncertainty around the UK's future relationship with the EU. Even with a deal agreed, the future basis of UK-EU trade will affect the longer-term viability period of 3-5 years and a longer consideration of prospects.

ACTION: Depending upon events through to the date of signing, we would expect to see annual reports reflecting at least:

- Relevant risks and uncertainties, and actions taken to manage those risks; and
- Consideration of whether there is any impact on critical accounting judgements and areas of estimation uncertainty.

We will discuss with the Board closer to the time areas where disclosures may be appropriate.



Climate-related risks

The report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made it clear that prompt and decisive action on climate change is required from governments, businesses and individuals alike.

The recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) are gaining momentum. The government has proposed mandatory TCFD disclosures by 2022, and the FRC is undertaking a major review of how organisations assess and report the impact of climate change. The FRC expects organisations to disclose how they have taken climate change into account in assessing the resilience of the business model, its risks, uncertainties and viability both in immediate and longer term.

Investors are challenging companies that are not factoring the effects of the Paris Climate Agreement into their critical accounting judgements and are not disclosing comprehensively these judgements, assumptions, sensitivities and uncertainties.

ACTION: Clearly articulate how your organisation is addressing climate change e.g.

- Whether this is a principal risk and how it is being managed; and
- Its impact on the business model, the viability statement and the key assumptions and projections in impairment reviews and valuations (including in assessing remaining asset lives).

Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect

ISA (UK) 570 – Going concern

The FRC issued a revised going concern standard in September 2019, that takes effect for periods commencing on or after 15 December 2019. For public sector bodies, this will be March 2021 year ends and later.

The revision was made in response to recent enforcement cases and well-publicised corporate failures where the auditor's report failed to highlight concerns about the prospects of entities which collapsed shortly after.

We have summarised below the key areas of change in the standard – however, the Public Audit Forum is also consulting on changes to Practice Note 10, with the intention of reflecting public sector considerations in the approach to going concern, and so the ultimate impact of ISA (UK) 570 changes will be affected by this.

The key changes affect:

- Risk assessment procedures and related activities, increasing consideration of the entity's business model, operations and financing;
- The auditor's evaluation of management's assessment of the going concern assumption (which therefore requires a clearly documented assessment to be prepared by management);
- Enhanced professional scepticism requirements, including around the evaluation of the sufficiency and appropriateness of audit evidence;
- Considering the appropriateness of disclosures; and
- Reporting in enhanced audit reports.

"The revised standard means UK auditors will follow significantly stronger requirements than those required by current international standards."

FRC's press release, 30 September 2019

Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect (continued)

ISA (UK) 540 – Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures

Since 2015, the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB) has sought to identify audit issues relating to accounting estimates for financial institutions and other entities. Initially, this focused on the impact of IFRS 9 *Financial Instruments*, because it would fundamentally change the way that banks and other entities account for loan assets and other credit exposures.

However, the IAASB concluded that most, if not all, issues identified for expected credit losses would be equally relevant when auditing other complex accounting estimates. Accordingly, a holistic revision of ISA 540 was undertaken and the new standard takes effect for periods commencing on or after 1 January 2020. For public sector bodies, this will be March 2021 year ends and later.

We summarise on the next few slides how this will impact our audit.

“There is a clear need to update ISA 540 to support better quality audits of increasingly complex accounting estimates”

FRC letter to the IAASB, July 2017

Area of change	Impact on our audit	Impact on the Board
Assessment of oversight and governance relating to estimates	In connection with our planning work to understand the entity and its environment, including internal control, we will specifically enquire regarding management’s processes, and the oversight and governance of those processes relating to accounting estimates.	You will need to consider the adequacy of your processes and controls over estimates, and documentation thereof.

Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect (continued)

ISA (UK) 540 – Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures (continued)

Area of change	Impact on our audit	Impact on the Board
Identification of inherent risk factors; separate assessment of inherent risk and control risk	Recognising a spectrum of inherent risk, we will assess risks of material misstatement in estimates with reference not only to estimation uncertainty, but also complexity, subjectivity or other inherent risk factors, and the interrelationship among them.	You will need to provide clear documented rationale for (a) the selection and application of the method, assumptions and data in making the accounting estimate, including any changes in the current year, and controls relating to those aspects; and/or (b) the selection of a point estimate and related disclosures for inclusion in the financial statements.
Objectives-based work effort requirements	We will specifically assess control risk relating to estimates, which may require us to evaluate the design and determine implementation of an increased number of internal controls. Our subsequent audit procedures will be responsive to this assessment, and designed to obtain evidence around the methods, significant assumptions, data and (where applicable) the selection of a point estimate and related disclosures about estimation uncertainty.	
Enhanced “stand back” requirement, to evaluate the audit evidence obtained	We will specifically design our procedures, to enhance our application of professional scepticism, so that they are not biased towards finding corroborative evidence; our overall evaluation of the evidence obtained will weigh both corroborative and contradictory evidence.	You should expect more challenge of the evidence provided in support of accounting estimates, use of external data sources and your consideration of contradictory evidence.

Revisions to auditing standards coming into effect (continued)

ISA (UK) 540 – Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures (continued)

Area of change	Impact on our audit	Impact on the Board
Enhanced requirements about whether disclosures are “reasonable”	The extant ISA 540 required us to evaluate whether disclosures were “adequate”. The change to “reasonable” will involve greater consideration of the overall meaning conveyed through disclosures. For example, where estimation uncertainty associated with an estimate is multiple times materiality, we will consider whether the disclosures appropriately convey the high degree of estimation uncertainty and the range of possible outcomes.	You should expect more challenge on disclosures relating to estimates, particularly for where you have selected a point estimate from a range and those with high estimation uncertainty.
New requirements when communicating with those charged with governance	In accordance with ISA (UK) 260 and ISA (UK) 265, our communications from the audit have included significant qualitative aspects of your accounting practices and significant deficiencies in internal control. With the revised ISA (UK) 540, these communications will specifically include matters regarding accounting estimates and take into account whether the reasons for our risk assessment relate to estimation uncertainty, or the effects of complexity, subjectivity or other inherent risk factors.	You should expect increased reporting in relation to accounting estimates which may be mirrored in our Annual Audit Report.

Areas where we consider the impact to be greatest:

Key areas impacted will include property valuations and pension liability valuations:

- In relation to property valuations, which are based on valuation reports provided by qualified valuers, we expect to receive reports setting out the basis for the valuations, including the assumptions and valuation methodologies.
- As mentioned on page 15, the pension liability valuations are provided by the Board’s appointed actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, who produce a detailed report outlining the estimated liability at the year-end along with the associated disclosure requirements. Management should ensure that the information provided by the actuary is available in advance of the 2020/21 audit fieldwork.

Audit Quality

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 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 pensions specialists to support the audit team in our work on the net pension assets/liabilities.

In order to deliver a quality audit to you, each member of the core audit team has received tailored learning to develop their expertise in audit skills, delivered by Pat Kenny (Audit Director) 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.

Wider scope requirements

Overview

The Code of Audit Practice sets out four audit dimensions that frame the wider scope of the audit of the accounts. These are financial sustainability, financial management, governance and transparency and value for money. The audit dimensions provide a common framework for all the audit work conducted for the Auditor General and for the Accounts Commission.

Due to the relative size and scale of the functions delivered by the Board, we have concluded that the full wider scope audit is not appropriate. The Board has a budget of £2,817k, mainly comprising payroll costs. Transactions are generally routine in nature and the majority of funding is from the three constituent authorities (South Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, and East Ayrshire Council). We have updated our risk assessment which included consideration of the Board's risk registers and have concluded that the "small body" exemption is still appropriate. In accordance with the Code, our work in this area will therefore be restricted to concluding on the following:

Audit dimension	Significant risk identified	Planned audit response
Governance statement	There is a risk that the disclosures in the governance statement do not meet the requirements of the guidance note issued by CIPFA "Delivering good governance in local government: framework 2016" or are inconsistent with our knowledge of the Board.	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.
Financial sustainability	<p>The financial impact of the pandemic includes a couple areas of forecast underspend including employee costs (£333k) and administrative costs (£66k). The underspend in employee costs is due to the ongoing challenges of recruiting qualified staff in the current marketplace, the impact of lockdown on the recruitment process and new posts arising from the Barclay Review. The underspend in administrative costs is due to savings in postage due to the transition to electronic communication methods, which is in part accelerated by the pandemic.</p> <p>The largest risk for the financial sustainability of the Board continues to be the impact of the move to 3-yearly revaluations rather than specifically COVID-19.</p>	<p>We will review the Board's medium to longer term financial planning to ensure that it includes a capital plan, scenario planning and sensitivity analysis, and also to ensure that it builds in funding for the additional responsibilities from the Barclays Review.</p> <p>We will also consider any additional implications of EU withdrawal and the COVID-19 pandemic on the Board's financial sustainability.</p>

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; and
- Key regulatory and corporate governance updates, relevant to you

Use of this report

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.

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.

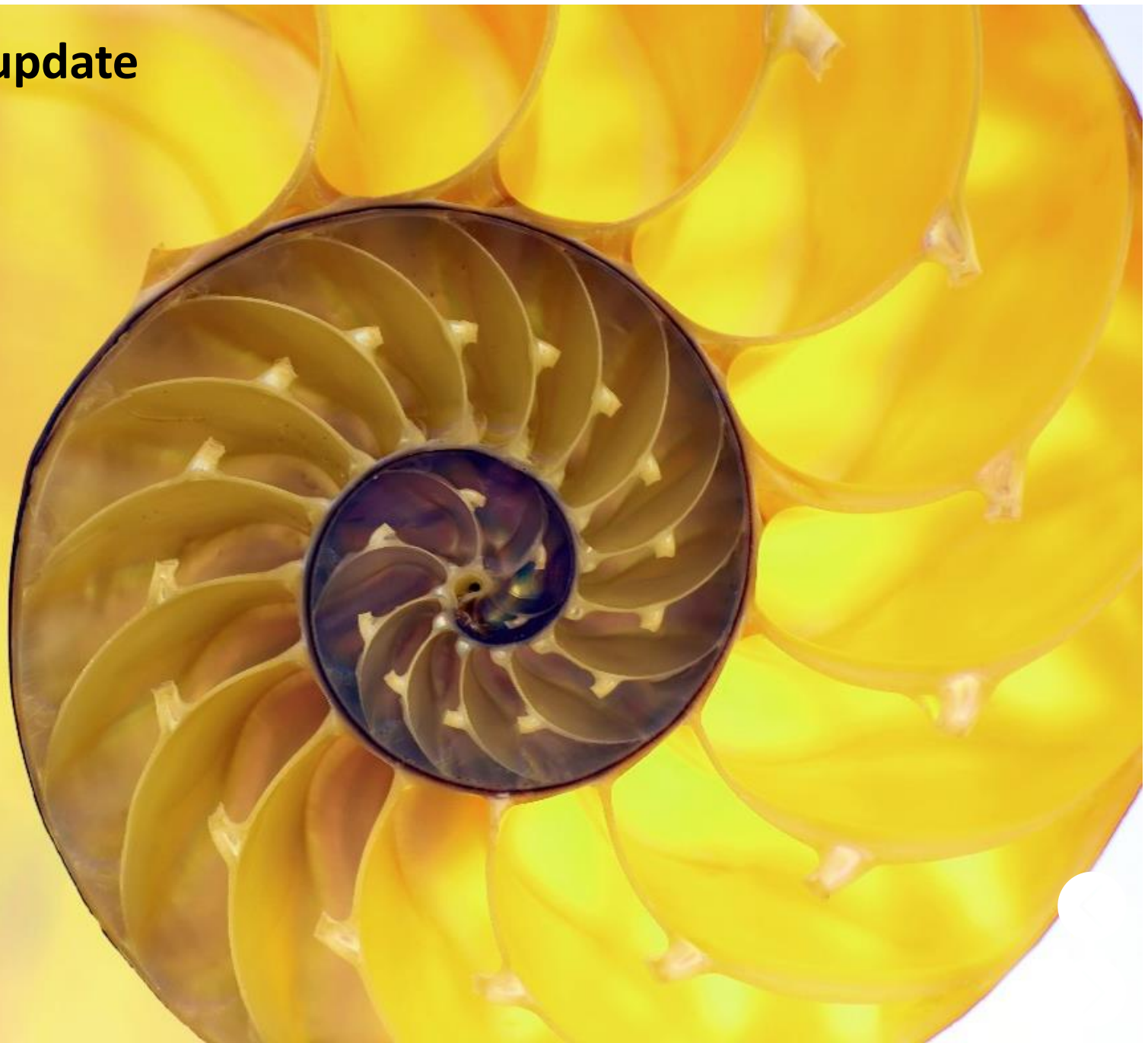
Other relevant communications

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



Pat Kenny
for and on behalf of Deloitte LLP
Glasgow | 18 February 2021

Technical update



What does climate change mean for business?

New website – learning, interviews and resources

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!

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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!

Supported by



Visit: www.deloitte.co.uk/climatechange

Changes to accounting standards

IFRS 16 - Leases

Background

The implementation of the new standard has been deferred again for another year, with a revised implementation date of 2022/23 and will require adjustments to recognise on balance sheet arrangements currently treated as operating leases.

For 2021/22, 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 2021/22 impact.

Separate to the financial reporting impact, but potentially more critical, budgets for 2022/23, 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.

While the deferral of implementation means there is no direct impact on the 2020/21 annual accounts, finance teams should use this additional time to continue their preparation for implementation.

Next steps

We recommend that the Board review the impact of IFRS 16, including calculating any adjustments that will be required as at 31 March 2022 for transition. We would suggest that the Board receive reporting from management on the implementation of the new standard, and we will report specifically on the findings from our audit work in this area.

Changes to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting

2020/21

Background

The accounting code has been issued by the CIPFA/ LASAAC Local Authority Code Board and its financial reporting framework is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by the European Union, adapted for the local government context where necessary.

The 2020/21 accounting code has been prepared on the basis of accounting standards and other pronouncements in effect for accounting periods commencing on or before 1 January 2020 (except for IFRS 16 Leases discussed on page 29).

The changes in the 2020/21 accounting code are summarised in the Foreword. The most significant changes impacting the Board are:

- ***The total line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement*** – the line description used now needs to provide clarity regarding the use of positive and negative signage. For example, where brackets are used to represent an overall surplus the description “Total comprehensive (income) and expenditure” may be used.
- ***Amendments to reflect changes to the definition of material in IAS 8*** – it now states that information is material if omitting, misstating or obscuring it could reasonably be expected to influence decisions that users make on the basis of those financial statements.
- ***The implementation of amendments to IAS 19 Employee Benefits*** – it creates an exception to the rule that financial assumptions are based on market expectations at 31 March. Where a pension scheme amendment, curtailment or settlement occurs during the year the amended assumptions, as used for the re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability, are to be applied in relation to the benefits for the remainder of the year.

Next steps

We recommend that management review the changes to the accounting code at the earliest opportunity. We are happy to have early discussion on this to agree proposed amendments.

The State of the State 2020-21

Government in the pandemic and beyond

Background and overview

Now in its ninth year, this report brings together Deloitte and Reform to reflect on new research into the issues facing government and public sector across the UK. This year, that research focuses on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic both on the public sector and the public it services. It comes as all nations of the UK faces new lockdown measures designed to reduce transmission, manage demand on health services and ultimately saving lives.

At the heart of the report is our exclusive citizen survey, which offers insight into perceptions of public services and public spending beyond COVID-19, as well as a public perspective on the government's 'levelling up' agenda.

That survey is complemented by our interviews with public sector leaders. This year, we spoke to 40 senior figures in government and public services, producing the most extensive qualitative research of its kind.

Next steps

A summary of the key conclusions are provided on the next page. The full report is available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/public-sector/deloitte-uk-state-of-the-state-2020.pdf>



The State of the State 2020-21 (continued)

Government in the pandemic and beyond (continued)

The state according to the public

A survey of more than 5,000 members of the public shows how people feel about tax, spending and public service priorities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We also explore attitudes towards data sharing with and across government, and unpick what the public across each nation and region wants to see levelled up

58% of the public believe opportunities for young people will be worse as a result of coronavirus.

42% of the public believe that community spirit will have improved after the pandemic



The state according to the people who run it

Over 40 senior public sector figures in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland talked with us about the issues that matter to them. We explore their views on the legacy of COVID-19, levelling up, EU Exit and creating a data-driven government.

Our interviews of **40** senior public sector figures found that many want to retain the agility of new ways of working however, many sense a gravitational pull back to normality.

Fast forward to the past

Is automation making organisations less diverse?

Background and overview

Robotics and intelligent automation are in the process of transforming the nature of work and the skills required to do it. Whilst there is a clear risk of reinforcing structural inequalities there is also an opportunity to address diversity issues within automation programmes to ensure public sector organisations can capitalise on the benefits that both automation and diversity bring to business outcomes.

For many public sector organisations implementing automation whilst considering diversity is new and uncharted territory. We would like to encourage our public sector clients to consider and discuss this crucial issue.

Based on exclusive client interviews, insight from public sector projects and extensive desk research, our report explores the potential risks of not considering the implications of automation on workforce diversity and inequality. It also identifies the barriers to embedding diversity in automation programmes.

The report provides a practical four stage framework to integrate diverse groups to not only survive but thrive in a new automated and digital world.

Next steps

The full report is available at <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/public-sector/deloitte-uk-diversity-and-automation-brochure-landscape.pdf>



Appendices



Prior year audit adjustments

Uncorrected misstatements

The following uncorrected misstatements were identified during the course of our prior year audit:

		Debit/ (credit) CIES £k	Debit/ (credit) MIRS £k	Debit/ (credit) net assets £k	Debit/ (credit) reserves £k	If applicable, control deficiency identified
Pension Liability – McCloud current service costs	[1]	6.5	(6.5)	(6.5)	6.5	N/A
Total		6.5	(6.5)	(6.5)	6.5	

[1] The actuary had not made any allowance within the current service costs for the impact of McCloud, therefore it did not fully represent the cost of the benefits accruing for current service. The Board's actuary estimated that the potential impact of this was a £6.5k understatement of the liability. As the pension liability is fully mitigated by statutory adjustments, this misstatement had no impact on the overall General Fund position.

We obtained written representations from the Board confirming that after considering all these uncorrected items, both individually and in aggregate, in the context of the financial statements taken as a whole, no adjustments were required.

Our other responsibilities explained

Fraud responsibilities



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 risks of material misstatement due to fraud in relation to occurrence of income, and management override of controls.
- We will explain in our audit report how we considered the audit capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud. In doing so, we will describe the procedures we performed in understanding the legal and regulatory framework and assessing compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Whilst this requirement has been in place for a few years for public interest entities (as defined by the EU Audit Regulation), recent changes to ISAs (UK) mean it will apply to **all** entities for periods **commencing on or after 15 December 2019**.



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.

Our other responsibilities explained (continued)

Fraud responsibilities (continued)

We will make the following inquiries regarding fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations:



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 risks of fraud.
- Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud.
- 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, in particular the Assessor.



Internal audit

- Whether internal audit 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:

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 2021 in our final report to the Board.

Fees

The audit fee for 2020/21, in line with the fee range provided by Audit Scotland is £7,610, as analysed below:

	£
Auditor remuneration	6,620
Audit Scotland fixed charges:	
Pooled costs	630
Audit support costs	0
Contribution to PABV	360
Total proposed fee	7,610



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

Non-audit services

In our opinion there are no inconsistencies between the FRC's Ethical Standard and the company'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.

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.

Our approach to quality

AQR team report and findings

Audit quality remains our number one priority and we have a relentless commitment to it. We continue to invest in and enhance our Audit Quality Monitoring and Measuring programme.

In July 2020 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 2019/20 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 are pleased with our results for the inspections of FTSE 350 entities achieving 90% assessed as good or needing limited improvement, which included some of our highest risk audits. Our objective is for 100% of our audits to be assessed as good or needing limited improvement and we know we still have work to do in order to meet this standard. 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 prior year adjustments is reflected in the results of current year inspections with no findings in this areas. In addition the FRC identified good practice examples including in: risk assessment, group oversight, our comprehensive IFRS9 expected credit loss audit programme and our audit committee reporting.

Embedding a culture of challenge in our audit practice underpins the key pillars of our audit strategy. 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>



Our approach to quality (continued)

AQR team report and findings (continued)

The AQR's 2019/20 Audit Quality Inspection Report on Deloitte LLP

“We reviewed 17 individual audits this year and assessed 13 (76%) as requiring no more than limited improvements. Of the ten FTSE 350 audits we reviewed this year, we assessed nine (90%) as achieving this standard.”

“We have highlighted in this report aspects of firm-wide procedures which should be improved, including strengthening the monitoring of the firm’s audit quality initiatives.”

“Our key findings related principally to the need to:

- Improve the extent of challenge over cash flow forecasts in relation to the impairment of goodwill and other assets.
- Enhance the effectiveness of substantive analytical review and other testing for revenue.
- Improve the assessment and extent of challenge regarding management’s estimates, particularly for model testing.”

“The firm has taken steps to address the key findings in our 2019 public reports, with actions that included focused training and standardising the firm’s audit work programs.

We have identified improvements, for example in the audit of potential prior year adjustments and related disclosures, a key finding last year. We also identified good practice in a number of areas of the audits we reviewed (including effective group oversight and robust risk assessment) and in the firm-wide procedures (including the firm’s milestone program, with expected dates for the phasing of the audit monitored by the firm).”





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