

Scottish Social Services Council

**Financial year ending
31 March 2022**

External Audit Plan

Audit and Assurance Committee

28 February 2022



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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 planning 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 organisation or all weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and Audit Scotland (under the Audit Scotland Code of Practice 2016). 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.

Plan overview

The audit plan sets out our risk based audit approach for Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). This plan outlines our initial risk assessment and is reported to those charged with governance (Audit and Assurance Committee on behalf of the SSSC Council). We submit a copy of the final plan to Audit Scotland.

Wider Scope Audit – smaller body arrangements

In accordance with Audit Scotland's Code of Practice, we feel it is appropriate to continue to treat you as a smaller body under the Code. In 2021/22 we will consider SSSC's arrangements for ensuring financial sustainability as well as your governance arrangements in place to support disclosures contained within the annual governance statement included within your financial statements.

Materiality

We have calculated planning materiality for SSSC using prior year gross expenditure as our benchmark:

- £478,000 planning materiality (2% expenditure)
- Performance materiality of £358,000 (75% of planning materiality)
- Trivial is set at £23,900 (5% of overall materiality).
- Lower materiality of banding (£5,000) on Staff Remuneration Report

Other audit matters

We summarise other audit matters for Audit and Assurance Committee awareness. This includes:

- In accordance with the Code and planning guidance we also complete and submit a number of deliverables in year including sharing intelligence with Audit Scotland.
- Notifying Audit Scotland of any identified frauds during the year.
- Consideration of going concern in accordance with Practice Note 10.

Financial statement audit risks

At planning, in accordance with the ISA's (UK) and FRC Practice Note 10 we have identified the following significant financial statement audit risks:

- Management override of controls (ISA UK 240)
- Risk of fraud in expenditure (cut-off) (FRC PN10)
- Risk of fraud in revenue (cut-off)(ISA 240)
- Risk of material misstatement in defined benefit pension scheme liabilities.

Our Audit Fee

Audit fees were shared by Audit Scotland with SSSC in December 2021. Our fee agreed with Management is £21,100. This includes £3,740 of Audit Scotland pooled costs and £770 contribution to Audit Scotland costs. The fee includes £400 increase on the Audit Scotland baseline fee associated with additional audit work over accounting estimates. We reserve the right to review our fee during the audit should significant delays be encountered and/or new technical matters arise.

Introduction

Purpose

This document provides an overview of the planned scope and timing of the external audit of Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) for those charged with governance.

We are appointed by the Auditor General as the external auditors of SSSC for the 6 year period (2016/17 until 2021/22).

Respective responsibilities

Audit Scotland has issued a document entitled Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') dated 2016 covering this audit appointment period. This summarises where the responsibilities of auditors begin and end and what is expected from the audited body. Our respective responsibilities, and that of SSSC are summarised in Appendix 1 of this plan. We draw your attention to this and the Code.

Scope of our audit

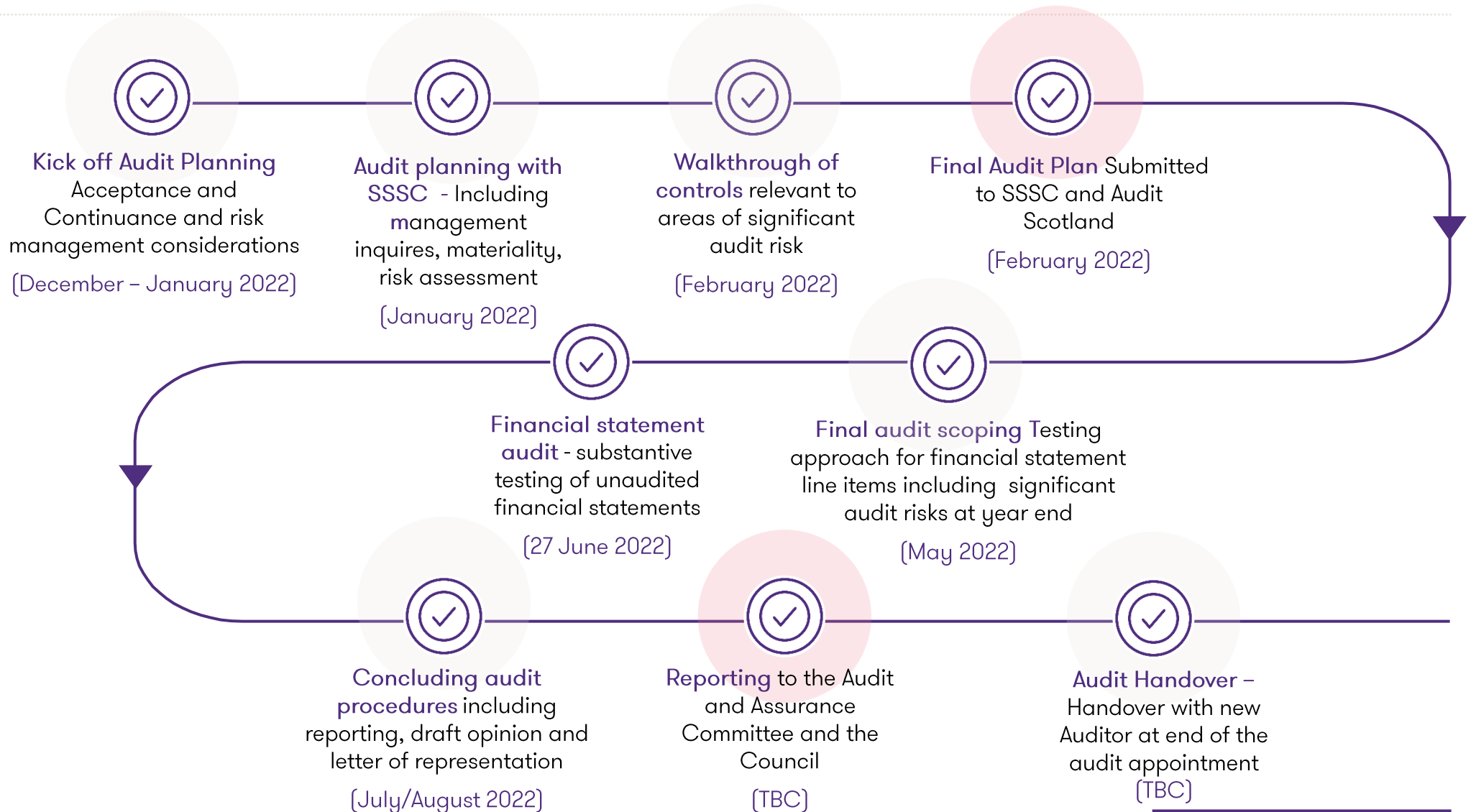
The scope of our audit is set in accordance with the Code and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK). We are responsible for forming and expressing an opinion on SSSC's financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance (the Audit and Assurance Committee).

The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or the Audit and Assurance Committee of your responsibilities. It is the responsibility of SSSC 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 will consider how SSSC is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our audit approach is based on a thorough understanding of SSSC and is risk based.

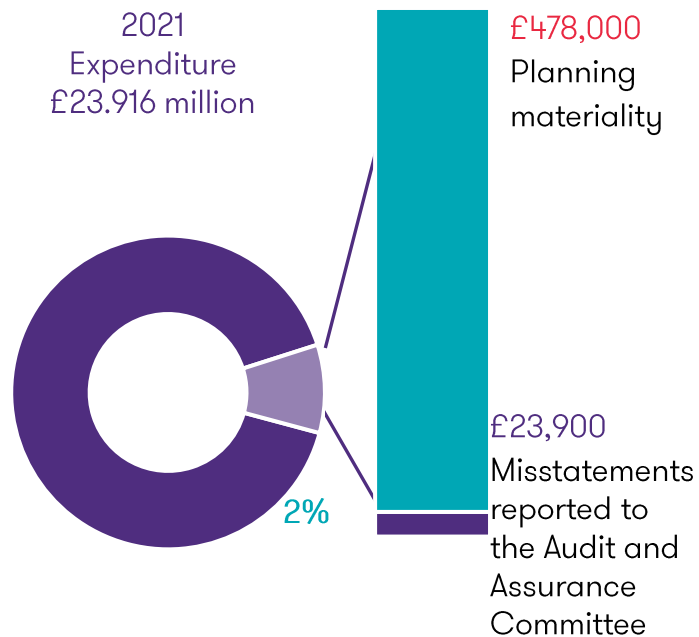


Audit approach



Materiality

Financial statement materiality is determined based on a proportion of the total operating expenditure. We have determined **planning materiality** to be £478,000 which equates to approximately 2% of your prior year total operating expenditure.



Performance materiality represents the amount set for the financial statements as a whole to reduce the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceed materiality. We use this to determine our testing approach to the financial statements. We have set this at 75% of planning materiality (£358,000) which is consistent with the rate used in the prior year. This is based on our understanding of SSSC including no material adjusted or unadjusted errors in the prior year and overall risk assessment.

Materiality reflects our professional judgement of the magnitude of an omission or misstatement that, individually or in the aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of the users of the financial statements.

On this basis we apply a separate **lower materiality level** to the Remuneration and Staff Report. This is set at 1 banding per disclosure in the financial statements (£5,000).

Under ISA 260 (UK) 'Communication with those charged with governance', we are required by auditing standards to report uncorrected omissions or misstatements other than those which are '**clearly trivial**' to those charged with governance. We have determined this threshold to be £23,900, being 5% of overall materiality.

We will update our materiality based on the unaudited 2021/22 financial statements when received. During the course of our audit engagement, we will continue to assess the appropriateness of our materiality.

Significant audit risks

Significant risks are defined by ISAs(UK) as risks that, in the judgement of the auditor, require special audit consideration. In identifying risks, audit teams consider the nature of the risk, the potential magnitude of misstatement, and its likelihood. Significant risks are those risks that have a higher risk of material misstatement.

Risk of fraud in revenue recognition (as required within Auditing Standards – ISA 240)

[completeness]

ISA 240 requires us to consider the risk of fraud in Revenue. This is considered a presumed risk in all entities. SSSC receives Grant in aid funding through resource allocations direct from the Scottish Government and we consider the risk of management manipulation and fraud through this funding stream as limited. During 2020/21 SSSC's operating income consisted of registration fees of £5.675 million and other income of £339,000 (not considered a risk of material misstatement). We therefore focus our significant risk of material misstatement on registration fee income. With projected underspend in the financial year we consider there increased risk of understatement of revenue to meet financial pressures in future years.

Our testing includes a specific focus on year end cut-off arrangements, where it may be advantageous for management to show an enhanced/different financial position in the context of reporting in-year to Scottish Government and the need to achieve the financial targets set. We therefore focus our testing on the occurrence of revenue recognised at year end including existence of receivables at the year end.

Risk of Fraud in Expenditure (as recommended in FRC Practice Note 10 for Public Sector entities)

[Occurrence]

As set out in Practice note 10 (revised) which applies to public sector entities we consider there to be an inherent risk of fraud in expenditure recognition. Operating expenditure is understated or not treated in the correct period (risk of fraud in expenditure). As payroll expenditure is well forecast and agreeable to underlying payroll systems, there is less opportunity for the risk of misstatement in this expenditure stream. We therefore focus on material non-pay expenditure streams including disbursements, supplies and services costs, administration costs and property costs. We consider the risk to be particularly prevalent around the year end and therefore focus our testing on cut-off of these expenditure streams. With forecast underspend we consider the risk to be overstatement of expenditure but will continue to monitor as part of our ongoing risk assessment.

Our testing includes a specific focus on year end cut-off arrangements, where it may be advantageous for management to show an enhanced/different financial position in the context of reporting in-year to Scottish Government and the need to achieve the financial targets set in the current and future years.

Significant audit risks (continued)

Management Override of Controls (as required within Auditing Standards – ISA 240)

As set out in ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that management override of controls is present in all entities. Our risk focuses on the areas of the financial statements where there is potential for management to use their judgement to influence the financial statements alongside the potential to override SSSC internal controls, related to individual transactions.

Our work focuses on critical estimates and judgements as set out within the financial statements, including accounting policies. In addition, we specifically consider cut-off (expenditure and income) and the use of manual journals during the year, and in creating the financial statements where controls may be overridden by management.

IAS 19 Defined Benefit Pension Liabilities (valuation)

SSSC participates in the Tayside Pension Fund, a local government pension scheme (LGPS). The scheme is a defined benefit pension scheme and in accordance with IAS 19: Pensions, SSSC is required to recognise its share of the scheme assets and liabilities on the statement of financial position. Barnett Waddingham LLP provide an annual IAS 19 actuarial valuation of SSSC's net liabilities in the pension scheme. There are a number of assumptions contained within the valuation, including: discount rate; future return on scheme assets; mortality rates; and, future salary projections. Given the material value of the scheme liabilities and the level of estimation in the valuation, there is an inherent risk that the defined benefit pension scheme liability could be materially misstated within the financial statements. In particular, the assumptions applied in the valuation may not be appropriate resulting in material misstatement.

We will consider the work of the actuary, including the assumptions applied, using the work performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (commissioned on behalf of Audit Scotland to review actuarial assumptions proposed by LGPS actuaries), as well as local audit assessment. We will liaise with Audit Scotland as Auditors of the Pension Fund to provide assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to SSSC, including assets held and confirm joint assurances in respect of employer and employee contributions in the year. We will review and test the accounting entries and disclosures made within SSSC's financial statements in relation to IAS 19.

On completion of audit planning procedures we will conclude the significant risks of material misstatement within our financial external audit plan. We will communicate significant findings on these areas as well as any other significant matters arising from the audit to you in our Annual Report to those Charged with Governance and the Auditor General for Scotland in concluding our audit in August 2022.

Other matters

Auditor Responsibilities

We have a number of audit responsibilities as set out in the Code and planning guidance:

- We audit parts of your Remuneration and Staff Report in your Annual Report and check whether these sections of your Annual Report have been properly prepared (opinion).
- We read the sections of your Annual Report which are not subject to audit and check that they are consistent with the financial statements on which we give an opinion (opinion).
- We carry out work to satisfy ourselves that disclosures made in your Annual Governance Statement are in line with requirements set out in FReM (opinion).
- We consider our other duties under the Code and planning guidance (2021/22), as and when required, including:
 - Supporting Audit Scotland in Section 22 reporting.
 - Participating in the Audit Scotland Central Government Sector group.
 - Notifying Audit Scotland of any cases of money laundering or fraud
 - Review of Technical guidance prior to issue by Audit Scotland.

Internal control environment

Throughout our audit planning and fieldwork we will continue to develop our understanding of the overall control environment (design) as related to the financial statements. In particular we will:

- Consider procedures and controls around related parties, journal entries and other key entity level controls.
- Perform walkthrough procedures on key controls around identified risk areas including: Scottish Government income, Income from fees and charges, payroll expenditure, material non-pay expenditure streams (disbursements, supplies and services costs, administration costs and property costs), journal entries and material areas of management estimate and judgement including defined benefit pension scheme liabilities.
- Our focus is design and implementation of controls only. We do place reliance on controls when it comes to our year end financial statement audit work.

Other material balances and transactions

Under International Standards on Auditing, "irrespective of the assessed risks of material misstatement, the auditor shall design and perform substantive procedures for each material class of transactions, account balance and disclosure". All other material balances and transaction streams will therefore be audited. However, the procedures will not be as extensive as the procedures adopted for the risks identified in this report.

Going concern assessment

As auditors, we are required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding, and conclude on:

- whether a material uncertainty related to going concern exists; and
- the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements.

The Public Audit Forum has been designated by the Financial Reporting Council as a "SORP-making body" for the purposes of maintaining and updating Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (PN 10). It is intended that auditors of public sector bodies read PN 10 in conjunction with (ISAs) (UK).

PN 10 has recently been updated to take account of revisions to ISAs (UK), including ISA (UK) 570 on going concern. The revisions to PN 10 in respect of going concern are important.

In particular, PN 10 allows auditors to apply a 'continued provision of service approach' to auditing going concern, where appropriate. In considering going concern we will refer to Audit Scotland's Going Concern publication (December 2020). Within our wider scope work we will conclude on SSSC's arrangements to ensure financial sustainability.

Accounting estimates

Under ISA (UK) 540 auditors are required to understand and assess an entity's internal controls over accounting estimates, including:

- The nature and extent of oversight and governance over management's financial reporting process relevant to accounting estimates;
- How management identifies the need for and applies specialised skills or knowledge;
- How the entity's risk management process identifies and addresses risks relating to accounting estimates;
- The entity's information system;
- The entity's control activities in relation to accounting estimates; and
- How management reviews the outcomes of previous accounting estimates.

To ensure compliance with this revised auditing standard, we will be requesting further information from management and those charged with governance during our audit. Based on our knowledge of SSSC we have identified one material accounting estimates for which this is likely to apply being defined benefit pension scheme liabilities.

Other financial reporting developments - Changes in the FReM for 2021/22

One of the changes to the FReM 2021/22 is to expanded requirements for Fair Pay Disclosures within the remuneration and staff report. This is in line with changes made to the FReM for 2021/22. The main changes are:

- A new requirement to disclose the percentage year on year changes in salary and allowances, and performance pay and bonuses, for the highest paid director and for the employees of the entity taken as a whole.
- total pay and benefits, and the salary component separately, for the 25th, 50th and 75th percentiles (previously just the median remuneration). This should be based on annualised, full-time equivalent remuneration of all staff (including temporary and agency staff) as at 31 March 2022. For the purpose of this disclosure, pay and benefits excludes the value of pension benefits and severance payments.
- a summary for 2021/22 explaining:
 - whether movement in the ratios is attributable to a change in the highest paid director's remuneration or the employees, or a change in the body's employment models;
 - trends in the median pay ratio; and,
 - whether the body believes that the median pay ratio reflects the pay, rewards and progression policy for employees as a whole.

We will review SSSC's Remuneration and Staff report disclosures in the draft financial statements to evaluate whether the disclosers are complete, clear, concise, and free from material misstatement.

Wider Scope Audit – smaller body arrangements

For smaller bodies the Audit Scotland Code of Practice permits auditors to not apply the full wider scope audit. In our judgement, taking into account the nature of SSSC's operating activity and income and expenditure streams, we feel it is appropriate to continue to treat you as a smaller body under the Code. However, in accordance with Audit Scotland planning guidance, we will update our understanding of your arrangements for ensuring financial sustainability as well as your governance arrangements in place to support disclosures contained within the annual governance statement included within your financial statements.

Audit timeline



Client responsibilities

Where clients do not deliver to the timetable agreed, we need to ensure that this does not impact on audit quality or absorb a disproportionate amount of time, thereby disadvantaging other clients. Where additional resources are needed to complete the audit due to a client not meeting their obligations we are not able to guarantee the delivery of the audit to the agreed timescales. In addition, delayed audits will incur additional audit fees.

Our requirements

To minimise the risk of a delayed audit, you need to ensure that you:

- produce draft financial statements of good quality by the deadline you have agreed with us, including all notes, the Annual Report and the Annual Governance Statement
- ensure that good quality working papers are available at the start of the audit, in accordance with the working paper requirements schedule that we have shared with you
- ensure that the agreed data reports are available to us at the start of the audit and are reconciled to the values in the accounts, in order to facilitate our selection of samples for testing
- ensure that all appropriate staff are available (or as otherwise agreed) over the planned period of the audit
- respond promptly and adequately to audit queries.

Quality and adding value through the audit

Our overall approach for the audit is clear and upfront communication, founded on our public sector credentials and a methodology to ensure delivery of a quality audit.

The diagram opposite summarises our key approach to adding value to you throughout our audit.

Our methodology is risk based. We comply with Auditing standards and as a Firm we are regulated by the FRC. We taking findings on audit quality seriously and continue to invest as a Firm through our audit investment plan. The audit investment plan is supported by a specific national Public Sector audit plan.

We comply with Audit Scotland's quality arrangements including submitting an annual quality report over our Audit Scotland portfolio. As part of Audit Scotland's quality arrangements, ICAS review our work on a rotational basis. Audit Scotland's quality report can be found at www.audit-scotland.co.uk

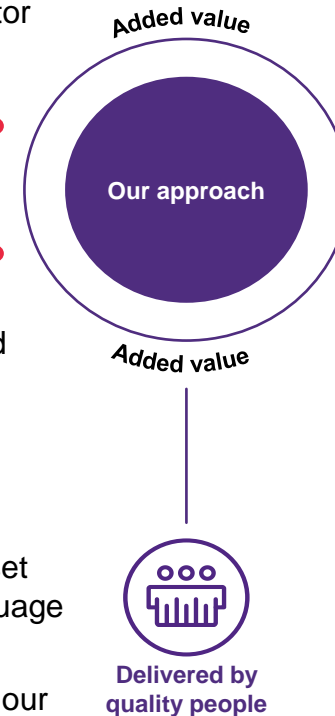
Our wider quality arrangements are set out in our annual transparency reports which are available on our website (www.granthornton.co.uk).

Project management

- Use of Inflo to track progress and deliverables throughout the audit
- Clear roles and ownership of responsibilities within our team
- Clarity over expectations and timetable
- Track record delivering public sector audits on behalf of Audit Scotland

Clear reporting

- Clear audit outputs at planning and within our final Annual Report
- Practical, risk based, recommendations for you to take forward
- Our judgements and conclusions set out transparently and in clear language
- Senior presence at Audit and Assurance Committees to present our findings and support wider dialogue



Pragmatism and early attention of issues

- Accessible and proactive engagement team
- Working with you to reach the right solution – flexing the workplan, recognising Covid-19
- Audit director takes ultimate decision on technical matters, consulting with our technical experts

Public sector understanding

- Using our public sector insight to inform our audit and identify improvements you could make
- Regular meetings throughout the year sharing our observations and wider sector knowledge
- Wider scope conclusions to support you in considering key risks and the improvement actions to take

Audit Fees

Across all sectors and firms, the FRC has set out its expectation of improved financial reporting from organisations and the need for auditors to demonstrate increased scepticism and challenge and to undertake additional and more robust testing. This includes the revised ISA (UK) 540 (revised): Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures.

As a firm, we are absolutely committed to meeting the expectations of the FRC over audit quality and public sector financial reporting. This includes, for Audit Scotland contracts, meeting the expectations of the Audit Scotland Quality Team and the ICAS quality framework.

Audit baseline fees were shared by Audit Scotland with SSSC in December 2021. Audit Scotland guidance allows auditors to set fees up to 20% above baseline fee where risks or issues identified may require additional audit procedures to be undertaken. To meet auditing standards, particularly in relation to ISA 540, we anticipate additional audit work over key accounting estimates. We therefore have agreed with Management to increase the baseline fee by £400.

Relevant professional standards

Audit Scotland set the baseline audit fee. We can increase the fee, from the baseline, for the inclusion of additional risks, new technical matters or specific client matters identified. We are required to consider all relevant professional standards, including paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the FRC's Ethical Standard (revised 2019) which state that the Engagement Lead must set a fee sufficient to enable the resourcing of the audit with partners and staff with appropriate time and skill to deliver an audit to the required professional and Ethical standards.

Audit fees for 2021/22

Service	Fees £
External Auditor Remuneration	16,590
Pooled Costs	3,740
Contribution to Audit Scotland costs	770
Contribution to Performance Audit and Best Value	Nil
2021/22 Fee	21,100

Additional Fees (Non-Audit Services)

Service	Fees £
At planning stage we confirm there are no non-audit fees	Nil

Fee assumptions

In setting the fee for 2021/22 we have assumed that the SSSC will:

- prepare a good quality set of accounts, supported by comprehensive and well-presented working papers which are ready at the start of the audit
- provide appropriate analysis, support and evidence to support all critical judgements and significant judgements made in preparing the financial statements
- provide early notice of proposed complex or unusual transactions which could have a material impact on the financial statements.

Independence

Auditor independence

Ethical Standards and ISA (UK) 260 require us to give you timely disclosure of all significant facts and matters that may bear upon the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm or covered persons relating to our independence.

We encourage you to contact us to discuss these or any other independence issues with us.

We will also discuss with you if we make additional significant judgements surrounding independence matters.

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention.

We have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard (Revised 2019) and we as a firm, and each covered person, confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Ethical Standard.

Our team complete annual fit and proper declarations including independence confirmations on a client by client basis as well as completing timesheets. The work of our Ethics team is overseen by the Ethics partner and all staff undergo ethics training in year.



Appendices

Responsibilities

The Code sets out auditor responsibilities and responsibilities of the audited body. Key responsibilities are summarised below. Please refer to the Code for further detail.

SSSC

Responsibilities include:

- Preparing financial statements that give a true and fair view
- Maintaining accounting records
- Establishing and maintaining systems of internal control
- Effective internal controls including controls to achieve objectives and secure value for money
- Establish arrangements for proper conduct of affairs including legality of transactions
- Arrangements for prevention and detection of fraud, error, irregularity, bribery and corruption
- Appropriate corporate governance arrangements and arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of governance

External Audit

Responsibilities include:

- Comply with professional engagement and ethical standards
- Provide an ISA compliant audit and opinion on the financial statements including regularity of transactions
- Demonstrate compliance with the wider scope public audit as detailed in the Code and applicable guidance
- Liaise with and notify Audit Scotland when circumstances indicate a statutory report may be required. This includes sharing awareness of current and/or sector issues
- Notify Audit Scotland of any known or suspected frauds greater than £5,000
- Contribute to relevant performance studies (as set out in the planning guidance for the year)



Communication

ISA (UK) 260 as well as other ISAS set out prescribed matters which we are required to report to those charged with governance (we assume this to be the Audit and Assurance Committee on behalf of the Council). Our reporting responsibilities are set out below. We communicate all matters affecting the audit on a timely basis, to management and/or the Audit and Assurance Committee.

	Audit Plan	Annual Report (considered our ISA 260 Report)
Our communication plan		
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	•	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit, including planning assessment of audit risks and wider scope risks	•	
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	•	•
Significant matters in relation to going concern	•	•
Views about the qualitative aspects of SSSC's accounting and financial reporting practices, including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures		•
Significant findings from the audit		•
Significant matters and issues arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		•
Significant difficulties encountered during the audit		•
Significant deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit		•
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		•
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		•
Non-compliance with laws and regulations		•
Unadjusted misstatements and material disclosure omissions		•
Expected modifications to the auditor's report or emphasis of matter		•

Fraud responsibilities

The term fraud refers to intentional acts of one or more individuals amongst management, those charged with governance, employees or third parties involving the use of deception that result in a material misstatement of the financial statements. In assessing risks, the audit team is alert to the possibility of fraud at Scottish Social Services Council.

As part of our audit work we are responsible for:

- identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud in particular in relations to management override of controls.
- leading a discussion with those charged of governance on their view of fraud. Typically we do this when presenting our audit plan and in the form of management and those charged with governance questionnaires.
- designing and implementing appropriate audit testing to gain assurance over our assessed risks of fraud
- responding appropriately to any fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

As auditors we obtain reasonable assurance the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

We will obtain annual representation from management regarding managements assessment of fraud risk, including internal controls, and any known or suspected fraud or misstatement. We also make inquires of internal audit around internal control, fraud risk and any known or suspected frauds in year.

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.

It is SSSC's responsibility to establish arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularity. This includes:

- developing, promoting and monitoring compliance with standing orders and financial instructions
- developing and implementing strategies to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularity
- receiving and investigating alleged breaches of proper standards of financial conduct or fraud and irregularity.

Throughout the audit we work with SSSC to review specific areas of fraud risk, including the operation of key financial controls. We also examine the policies in place, strategies, standing orders and financial instructions to ensure that they provide a strong framework of internal control.

In addition, as set out in the Audit Scotland Code of Audit Practice we have a role in reviewing SSSC's arrangements in response to the National Fraud Initiative.

All suspected frauds and/or irregularities over £5,000 are reported to Audit Scotland by us as your auditors on a quarterly basis.

Anti-Money Laundering Arrangements

As required under the Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds Regulations 2017 there is an obligation on the Auditor General (as set out in the planning guidance) to inform the National Crime Agency if he knows or suspects that any person has engaged in money laundering or terrorist financing. Should we be informed of any instances of money laundering at SSSC we will report to the Auditor General as required by Audit Scotland.

Accounting estimates and related disclosures

The Financial Reporting Council issued an updated ISA (UK) 540 (revised): *Auditing Accounting Estimates and Related Disclosures* which includes significant enhancements in respect of the audit risk assessment process for accounting estimates. The first year this impacted on was the 2020/21 financial year.

Introduction

Under ISA (UK) 540 (Revised December 2018) auditors are required to understand and assess an entity's internal controls over accounting estimates, including:

- The nature and extent of oversight and governance over management's financial reporting process relevant to accounting estimates;
- How management identifies the need for and applies specialised skills or knowledge related to accounting estimates;
- How the entity's risk management process identifies and addresses risks relating to accounting estimates;
- The entity's information system as it relates to accounting estimates;
- The entity's control activities in relation to accounting estimates; and
- How management reviews the outcomes of previous accounting estimates.

As part of this process auditors also need to obtain an understanding of the role of those charged with governance, which is particularly important where the estimates have high estimation uncertainty, or require significant judgement.

Specifically do **Audit and Assurance Committee** members:

- Understand the characteristics of the methods and models used to make the accounting estimates and the risks related to them;
- Oversee management's process for making accounting estimates, including the use of models, and the monitoring activities undertaken by management; and
- Evaluate how management made the accounting estimates?

Additional information that will be required

To ensure our compliance with this revised auditing standard, we will be requesting again this year further information from management and those charged with governance during our audit for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Based on our knowledge of the SSSC, in particular prior year, we have identified only one material accounting estimate, being defined benefit pension scheme liabilities.

SSSC's Information systems

In respect of SSSC's information systems we are required to consider how management identifies the methods, assumptions and source data used for each material accounting estimate and the need for any changes to these. This includes how management selects, or designs, the methods, assumptions and data to be used and applies the methods used in the valuations.

If management has changed the method for making an accounting estimate we will need to fully understand management's rationale for this change.

Any unexpected changes are likely to raise the audit risk profile of this accounting estimate and may result in the need for additional audit procedures.

Financial accounting updates – International Financial Reporting standard 16: Leases

Following the previous deferrals of IFRS 16 *Leases* under the FReM, this accounting standard will now be implemented from 1 April 2022.

The new standard brings significant changes for lessee accounting. Key points that bodies will need to consider on transition include:

- The need to recognise the cumulative effects of initially applying IFRS 16 on 1 April 2022 as an adjustment to the opening balances of taxpayers' equity. (This means prior year comparators will not need to be restated at 31 March 2023).
- The need to recognise the right-of-use asset for leases previously classified as operating leases at an amount equal to the outstanding lease liability.
- No adjustments are needed for leases for which the underlying asset is of low value (less than £5,000 new) or where the lease term ends on or before 31 March 2023.
- Assets where there is no or a below market rate peppercorn lease premium should be recognised as a right-of-use asset measured at current value in existing use or fair value as appropriate. Any difference between this and the lease liability will be recognised as part of the adjustment to the opening balances of taxpayers' equity.
- Irrecoverable VAT should not be included in the lease liability nor the value of the right of use asset.
- Existing finance lease and PFI liabilities that have an element based on an index or other rate will need to be reviewed and possibly amended as such variable payments are incorporated into the measurement of the lease liability under IFRS 16. (HM Treasury is expected to provide further guidance regarding the implementation of changes to accounting for PFI arrangements).

Impact on 2021/22

The 2021/22 financial statements will need to disclose the anticipated impact of adopting IFRS 16 from 1 April 2022.

We will consider the organisation's progress towards the implementation of IFRS 16 and the completeness and accuracy of disclosures within the financial statements of the impact of the adoption of the new standard.

Auditing developments

There are changes to the following ISA (UK):

- ISA (UK) 315 (Revised July 2020) 'Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement' - This will impact audits of financial statement for periods commencing on or after 15 December 2021.
- ISA (UK) 240 (Revised May 2021) 'The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Statements' This will impact audits of financial statement for periods commencing on or after 15 December 2021.

A summary of the impact of the key changes on various aspects of the audit is included below:

Area of change	Impact of changes
Risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures performed in support of the audit opinion may change due to clarification of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the risk assessment process, which provides the basis for the assessment of the risks of material misstatement and the design of audit procedures • the identification and extent of work effort needed for indirect and direct controls in the system of internal control • the controls for which design and implementation needs to be assess and how that impacts sampling • the considerations for using automated tools and techniques.
Direction, supervision and review of the engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater responsibilities, audit procedures and actions are assigned directly to the engagement lead, resulting in increased involvement in the performance and review of audit procedures.
Professional scepticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design, nature, timing and extent of audit procedures performed in support of the audit opinion may change due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased emphasis on the exercise of professional judgement and professional scepticism • an equal focus on both corroborative and contradictory information obtained and used in generating audit evidence • increased guidance on management and auditor bias • additional focus on the authenticity of information used as audit evidence • a focus on response to inquiries that appear implausible

Area of change	Impact of changes
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design, nature timing and extent of audit procedures performed in support of the audit opinion may change due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarification of the requirements relating to understanding fraud risk factors • additional communications with management or those charged with governance
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amendments to these auditing standards will also result in additional documentation requirements to demonstrate how these requirements have been addressed.

